



TOM'S SUPPER

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Chatterbox.



'THE SPARROWS SAW IT.'

A STORY FOR YOUNG AND OLD.

From the German of A. Vollmar.



SUCH a glorious day as to-day is only comes once in the year—it is Christmas-Day. The snow, like a white table-cloth, lies everywhere on the ground: but where is the meal that should be spread on it? Better a meal without a table-cloth than a table-cloth without a meal. This the sparrows, who are flying about from tree to tree, seem to think too, or are they only moving about to keep themselves warm? Oh, no! they have a wonderful tailor, for when it snows and freezes the coat which they wear becomes thicker and warmer. No, they don't suffer in that respect, but they go on 'tweet, tweet, tweet,' for they are hungry the whole day. The stupid sparrows know nothing about saving; in summer they live in plenty, and think that their Heavenly Father will provide for them. Men take so much care for the future, but those little things have no hands for work—how then can they provide for the winter? Well, sometimes they pick the red berries from the hedges or the seeds out of the earth—the rogues! But now it is Christmas, everything is snowed over, the last red berry has been eaten: but the good God will certainly furnish them with a Christmas meal—so they are waiting for the good things which He will give them.

Look, there they come! Who? what? A labourer is carrying a heavy sack of corn up to the mill. But a cunning little mouse wished to try what sacks tasted like, and with its sharp teeth had nibbled a little hole in the corner; and look!—from that hole a most abundant Christmas dinner was pouring out for the poor sparrows. The whole road was strewn with grains of corn—such a feast could only be had at Christmas! You fat fellow there, don't eat too much, or you will be ill! And now the sun is peeping out from the clouds; he gives the most glorious Christmas light, for he shines much brighter than thousands of wax-lights. That is a happy meal, little fellow. You are the most stupid and impudent of all birds under the sky, and yet the great God thinks about you and careth for you.

Yes, they are very happy out there, and a fat little boy who is standing at the window and looking at the sparrows thinks so too. But now, with a sad face he toddles away from the window. What is the matter with you, little Heinrich? It is not like Christmas with you to-day: that is the reason why the poor boy is so sad. He is seven years old, so he has enjoyed several Christmas Eves, which he cannot forget. 'Oh, how pleasant it was a year ago!—then he had received the wooden horse, which now lies in the corner and gazes sadly at him with its blind eyes. How those eyes shone last Christmas Eve in the light of the Christmas-tree! Will no Christmas-tree, then, be decked and lighted up to-day? There, against the corner of the window leans a little pine; but it has no pot, so it has half fallen down, and its bare branches hang sleepily down—everything looks

sad. Yes, Heinrich, you are right, it is not at all like Christmas to-day.

But why is it thus? We will go into the next room, and then we shall discover why everything looks so sad and desolate to-day in the house of the tradesman Schröder. There his little daughter Minna is lying ill in bed. Her mother is looking down at her weeping; the doctor has told her she has but a few hours more to live; her father has gone out with a heavy heart—there is so much to do in the shop, and yet he would willingly be with his Minna to the end and fulfil her last wish. No one to-day thinks about the boy, about Heinrich; and he is much more sorry because he has no Christmas-tree than because his poor sister will die so soon.

Now she wakes from her restless slumber. She opens her eyes and recognises her mother. At the same moment Adelheid, the mayor's daughter, a girl of Minna's age, enters the room. She has come to see how she is; but she remains standing, quite horror-struck, for she had never thought that the sick girl could look so wretched as that.

'Do you want anything, my dear child?' asked the mother, bending tenderly over her daughter.

'Water,' she whispered, and after she had drunk some, she looked round as if she desired something else.

'What are you seeking for? Is there anything else you would like?—anything to eat?' inquired Frau Schröder.

'A bunch of grapes, please; do give me a bunch of grapes,' whispered the sick child.

Her mother looked at her sadly. Several times had Minna asked for a bunch of grapes, and she, who would willingly have gratified her child's every wish, could not satisfy this. Whence could she get a bunch of grapes in the middle of winter? She bent down over the sick girl, and spoke to her very kindly, but still several times she heard repeated in a whisper, 'I should so like a bunch of grapes.'

Adelheid heard this too. She first turned pale, then red, then she went away gently, without any one noticing it. With winged steps she hurried home. She had a bunch of grapes, a fresh bunch—she could fulfil the dying girl's wish. In autumn she had read in a book that bunches of grapes, if they were sealed up and carefully kept from the air, could be preserved till Christmas; so Adelheid had saved the largest and most beautiful bunch of grapes, carefully packed up, and to-day, as it was Christmas Eve, she meant to place it in a dish before her father, as it was his favourite fruit. For a long time she had been looking forward to his joyful surprise; but then he could enjoy many bunches of grapes again, but poor dying Minna—never. It was her last wish. Adelheid did not take long to make up her mind. She hastily took the bunch of grapes out of the box, hid it under her cloak, and hastened back to Schröder's—there everything was just as before. Heinrich was still sitting in the front room; he had scattered bread-crumbs on the window-ledge, and was waiting to see whether the sparrows would come and pick them up. The door into the adjoining room was a very little opened. Minna lay in bed with closed eyes, her mother sat beside her, gazing at her sick child.

'Keep quite still, Heinrich,' said Adelheid: 'do not wake your sister. Be quite quiet. She wants a

bunch of grapes so much, here is one. Give it to your mother as soon as she comes in here, tell her it is for Minna:—do you hear, boy?—don't forget it.'

Adelheid laid the fruit on the table. Heinrich promised to do as she requested. For a few moments Adelheid stood and gazed at her dear little friend through the half-opened door: she appeared to sleep, but Adelheid sometimes thought she was dead, till some movement of the sick girl showed her that she was still alive. Now, one more look, the last—and Adelheid went out at the door weeping.

Heinrich was now alone in the room. Alone with the bunch of grapes: he waited to see whether his mother would come; she sat quite still by the bedside. He waited, and meanwhile gazed at the grapes. How beautiful and large they were! The poor boy gazed at the bunch for such a long time that all the grapes seemed to beckon to him, saying, 'Come! come!' He went close up them, he felt them whether they were hard or soft. Quite soft. Surely they must taste very nice. He would only too gladly have tasted one; he had already stretched out his hand to take the bunch, when he suddenly recollected, It is for Minna, you ought not to touch it, and he quickly drew back his hand. Oh, had he only ran off, far away from it! Had he but called his mother and given her the bunch! But Heinrich still remained standing, and looked more and more longingly at the beautiful tempting fruit. He again stretched out his hand to take it, and then drew it back frightened. Something had moved in the next room. As if caught doing some evil action, he remained standing motionless and waited, his eyes directed half on the grapes, half on the door. But nobody came. After a little while he quite recovered from his fear, and now the Tempter in his heart began afresh. Why, then, should he not take the fruit? Everybody had so much joy to-day and so many presents—he alone had nothing.

Quite angry he looked down at his old playthings, which lay upon the ground; other children had new ones to-day, but he had none. Heinrich put his hands upon the grapes, he examined them; they looked so beautiful, how nice they must taste! And he need not eat the whole bunch, of course he should not think of that! he would only just take a couple of grapes; but why did the boy suddenly turn so crimson? From his mother and at school he had learned the eighth commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal,' now his conscience reminded him of it. Draw back your hand, Heinrich, go away, so that you may no longer look at that bunch; there is yet time; it does not give way to the sin, but gain the victory over it.

But Heinrich remained standing. 'I will only take that one grape which has a mark on it.' Thus he quieted his conscience. And he took the grape and ate it. How nice it was! He longed for more.

Hastily he took a few grapes, but now it could plainly be seen whence he had taken them; he broke a little cluster off from the bunch, then ran into a corner and ate it up quickly.

But now his desire had become still stronger, he had never thought that the fruit would taste so nice. He peeped through the crevice of the door, there lay his poor pale sister, for whom the grapes had been brought. He quickly turned away his eyes from

her, he looked much rather on the enticing fruit. But he was frightened now. It could plainly be seen that part of the bunch had been broken off. When his mother noticed that, she would ask him whether he had done it. What should he say then? Heinrich was not much afraid of telling a lie, but his mother had such a way of asking, that she always managed to get the truth out somehow or other. What should he do then? But she did not know that there was a bunch of grapes here: nobody had seen it; how would it be then if Heinrich was to eat it all up? Then nobody could question him, nobody scold him. His sister did not want the bunch of grapes, she had now for many days refused all food, even the nice things which Heinrich would gladly have eaten. And now a great terror came over him, his mother or his father might come into the room and see the bunch of grapes—quick, quick, he must eat it at once. He fell upon it, and in wild haste swallowed down grape after grape with skins and stones; there was no longer any enjoyment in it, he could no longer stop to think whether it was nice; quick, only quick, before anybody came.

Heinrich had finished now. Yes, at last. It had been almost too much for him. Now he put the stalk of the bunch into his pocket, wiped his hands a little; no one was there, he was quite alone. The little thief looked timidly round to see whether any eye had observed him. His mother sat motionless as before, his sister slept, no one had come in at the other door, at the window,—alas! alas! through that many eyes had looked at him, the sparrows outside on the window-ledge had seen everything, with their widely-opened beaks they chirped about, and no longer seemed to say 'Tweet, tweet,' but 'Fie, you thief! Fie, you thief!'

Heinrich covered his face with both his hands. He did not wish to hear or see any more. Then his mother came gently into the room; she embraced him and said, 'Poor child, are you very sad?' Yes, Minna will soon die, but then she will go to heaven. Do not cry.' And kissing him tenderly, she took him by the hand and went with him into the other room.

Here Minna had just awoke, her lips were dry, her mother wished to give her some water. The girl pushed it away with her hand.

'Please give me a bunch of grapes,' she whispered, very gently.

Sadly her mother looked around her.

'My child, it is Christmas, the snow is lying thick upon the ground out of doors; I cannot get you any grapes, indeed I cannot.'

'Ah!' replied Minna slowly, and her eyes sparkled, 'then I must have been dreaming. I thought I was in a garden, and all the trees were hanging with bunches of grapes. Oh, they were so large, and beautiful, and sweet—please, mother, do try and get me one.'

The sick girl closed her eyes again, she was probably dreaming again of that beautiful garden, and her mother thought of the verse—

Oh Paradise, oh Paradise,
Thy fruit indeed is sweet,
Beneath thy glorious trees of life
Our brightest dreams again we meet,
Bring us, O Lord, to Paradise.

But Heinrich was no longer in the room; he had heard his sister's words, he had seen his mother's sorrow, then he ran out. Oh, what would he not have given not to have eaten the grapes! But it was too late now. He wished to go in and tell his mother, but he was too great a coward for that. He feared the punishment he would have to bear, he was not honest enough openly to confess the truth. And there sat the stupid sparrows, still at the window, who had seen everything. He could not bear it any longer. He quickly opened the window and frightened them all away. Then he looked at his sister again. If she had eaten the bunch of grapes, would she have got well again? The thought passed suddenly through his little head. And now he threw himself upon the ground and wept, he felt so very unhappy, and now, not because no Christmas-tree was burning for him; he cried for a long while, and at last he fell fast asleep.

It was quite dark when he awoke, his father had taken him in his arms and was about to carry the great boy to bed: both his parents were crying. 'Minna is now in heaven,' sobbed the mother. Then Heinrich began to weep too, but he thought most of all of having eaten Minna's bunch of grapes.

This was a sad Christmas Eve.
(To be continued.)

AN ASYLUM FOR CATS.

SUCH an institution exists in America not far from Pittsburg; it was founded by Miss Mary K——, who throughout the neighbourhood goes by the name of the 'cats' lady.' All her powers of body and soul she has devoted to these 'dear, but shamefully-maligned creatures,' to whom, in the course of a long life, she has done wonders of benevolence. All unhappy and ill-treated cats in the neighbourhood seem to flee under Miss Mary's sheltering roof, and there find a kind reception and the tenderest care. Miss Mary, the daughter of a rich and respected farmer, has been devoted to cats from her earliest infancy. When she was twenty, an ardent admirer offered her his hand in marriage, but their happiness was of very short duration; on the day before the wedding, the bridegroom found the house so full of sleeping, purring cats, that his courage failed him, and he earnestly begged—first in friendly, then, as these had no effect, in angry tones—for the ejection of these unwelcome guests. This made so painful an impression on the tender-hearted lady, that she at once lost all sympathy for the barbarian who showed dislike for her darlings, and ordered him out of her house. He went willingly enough.

After her parents' death, Mary retired with her four-footed friends to a small country-house; and devoted all her income to herself and her cats. As she could not get any servants, she had to do all the household work herself—no slight labour, when one reflects what it must be to have to attend to from fifty to seventy cats every day, to comb and brush them, as well as to make their beds and feed them.

When Miss Mary goes for a walk accompanied by her cats, it is an immense amusement to the children of the neighbouring farmers, and eye-witnesses told me that the appearance of the 'cats' lady' was most comical; moreover, old and young are some-

what afraid of her, and one cannot approach her very closely. I could not resist the curiosity of paying a short visit to this remarkable lady, and I confess that my expectations were even surpassed. The house in which she lives is falling into ruin, and the garden, which serves as a playground for her beloved animals, is a perfect wilderness. I entered a large room in which, notwithstanding the open windows, the atmosphere was very unpleasant. Miss Mary, a tall lean figure with staring eyes and rough coarse hair, sat in an arm-chair, nursing and caressing a number of kittens. Around her sat numerous cats of all sizes, ages, and colours, who stared so fiercely at me with their sparkling eyes, that I felt quite uncomfortable. All the furniture was scratched and broken, and taken complete possession of by those animals; the purring, miaowing, and growling, were almost deafening. On taking leave, I asked the lady if she were not afraid to be left there alone in the country? 'Afraid!' she replied contemptuously, 'a free American is never afraid;' moreover, she added with great pathos, 'I have, as you see, a body-guard of my own; and believe me, a most trustworthy one. Look at my cats, they are grateful and wise creatures, and gentle as they are by nature, I am sure that at the least attack on their mistress, they would be changed into wild tigers! I experienced this some years ago. Thieves had broken into the house, my darlings raised their voices, and the intruders fled in terror out of the window.'

A few years ago, Miss Mary fell seriously ill, and some of her relations came to nurse her. Whilst she was lying in a fever, these hard-hearted people chased all the cats out of the house, and when Miss Mary recovered, she did not find a single one anywhere about, which nearly brought on a relapse. She wandered through fields and woods, piteously calling her darlings by their names, but only fifteen returned under her protecting roof; but now she has again raised the number to fifty. To punish her relations for their cruelty, she has disinherited them, and intends to leave all her fortune to found an asylum for cats.*

J. F. C.

WINTER TO RICH AND POOR.

THE rich man's boy laughs loud to find
Thick ice upon the streamlet's tide;
His round cheeks freshen in the wind,

His warm feet bound along the slide.
But little loves the poor man's heir
Upon the stagnant rill to look;

He crouches from the biting air,
His thin blood curdles with the brook.

The well-born daughter smiles to think
How gay the lighted room will seem
When friends shall meet to dance and drink,
And all be glad as fairy dream.

The poor man's girl can only care
To hug her tattered garments tight,
To wring the hoar-frost from her hair,
And pray that sleep may come with night.

ELIZA COOK.

* The above is related by a German traveller in America, and published in a Leipzig Magazine.



• Winter to Rich and Poor. •

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MARY'S DIFFICULTY.

OW, Mary, look after the child while I'm away. He'll sleep like a top the next two hours—bless him! But don't you leave him, all the same. Get your darning, and sit quiet by him, there's a good girl!

So spoke Mrs. Dodd, a soldier's wife, to her step-daughter, a girl of twelve or thirteen, as she lifted a large basket of clean clothes and prepared to set out on her usual

Saturday journey to the two or three houses in the town where she was employed as washerwoman.

Mary would have liked to have gone instead of her mother, but she knew that the basket was heavier than she could manage; so with a sigh she saw her mother leave the room. She could not make up her mind to take up her father's socks just at first; so she turned to the bed, where lay sound asleep a pretty boy of a year old, her pride and treasure. It had been a hot day—very hot for October; and little Harry, who had been fretting a good deal of late with his teeth, had dropped off quite exhausted, and was, as Mary well knew, not likely to wake for some time; so there was no chance of amusement with him. Still Mary leant over him, 'thinking back,' as she called it, of the number of teeth he had now, of the day when he cut his first, and the week before, when he had a fit, and mother was so frightened, and kind Mrs. Wynne, the captain's wife, came herself and helped to put him in a hot bath—of the time when he was quite little, and his head rolled from side to side, and mother would hardly let her touch him, he was so soft and tiny—of the days before he was born, when Mary thought her new mother a little tiresome and exacting in the amount of work she required of her: for Mary had had a long two years of idleness in her father's widowhood, and at first did not quite like her stepmother's busy ways. But Mrs. Dodd was a kind woman at heart, and Mary not an idle girl by nature; so time and little Harry had brought them together, and now Mrs. Dodd came next in Mary's affections to father and Harry.

Suddenly Mary roused herself. It would never do to waste the afternoon thinking; so she got her work and sat close to the window, for the days were getting short.

She had not worked long when a tap came to the door, and a child peeped in. 'Mary, you're wanted: there's Mrs. Wynne's cook asking for you, to wheel Master Lionel. Look sharp!' She says the children are to go to see their aunt, down at the hotel; and Mrs. Wynne doesn't wish them to be out in the dark. And the child disappeared.

'Wait, Katie, wait: I can't go,' Mary called after her: but Katie was off.

Mary looked despairingly round the room—the one room allotted to her father and mother, herself and little Harry, in Barminster Barracks. Harry still lay sleeping; the room was tidy against father should come in; she could well be spared, if only mother had not told her not to leave Harry. And Harry had been left before, several times, and never came to harm. True, mother had fretted about it

the first time or two; but when she came back and found Harry warm and snug as she had left him, she had laughed at herself for her fears, and said, hugging the child, that poor folks' babies must learn to rough it; and Master Harry, darling as he was, must not expect to have every scream attended to as if he was a little lord. All this passed through Mary's mind in a twinkling, and she tried to think what she ought to do. Mother had promised Mrs. Wynne she should always be ready to wheel Master Lionel's perambulator, for the nurse was ill, and the second nurse had a baby to carry; and since Mrs. Wynne had been so good to little Harry, the Dodds had been glad to oblige her, even if Mary had not brought home a silver sixpence now and then in return for her services. Besides, Captain Wynne was father's captain, and Mary was a soldier's daughter, and felt as if orders should be obeyed. True, her mother's command not to leave little Harry rang uncomfortably in her ears; but then she never thought of Mrs. Wynne wanting her so late. It was very perplexing, and Mary stood irresolute another minute. Then she made up her mind: an outing in the October twilight was too tempting. One more look at little Harry, and she snatched up her bonnet and was off; first, however, carefully locking the door and giving the key to the woman in the next room, begging her just to go in and hush Harry off again if he cried.

On reaching the officers' quarters, Mary found Master Lionel in his perambulator, screaming to be taken after the other children, who had already started. Mrs. Wynne, looking very pale and tired, stood over him. 'Now, Mary, you have kept us waiting; don't lose any time. Jane and the rest are gone down the hill, but you will soon catch them up. I am not coming, but tell Jane not to let the children be kept after five o'clock. Good-bye, my boy: kiss auntie for me.' And Mrs. Wynne went indoors.

There was nothing for Mary to do but to start. She had half meant to tell Mrs. Wynne that mother had bid her not leave Harry, and ask her advice, but the time for that was past. Down the hill she went, losing her uncomfortable feelings in the excitement of little Lionel on seeing the lamps lighted, and in the general bustle of the streets. The 'Golden Lion' was not very far off; and when she got there, and little Lionel was lifted out and carried into the house by a waiter, she had nothing to do but to stand and wait by the perambulator. That was stupid work, and her mind, not being quite at ease, would turn to uncomfortable subjects; but this she fought against. Harry could not come to harm, well wedged in bed by a bolster, with a toy near him in case he should wake. She would tell mother, too: she knew she would not have wished her to disappoint Mrs. Wynne, and so it would be all right. Nevertheless, it was a relief when Jane and the children appeared again, and one of the elder girls pressed a cake into her hands for little Harry. Mary lost no time with the perambulator, though the hill to the barracks was steep and Master Lionel heavy; she wanted to get home before her mother, and that she knew she could just do, as it took Mrs. Dodd a good two hours to dispose of all her washing. As it happened, however, Mrs. Dodd had had a lift in a cart, and got home a minute before Mary. Finding her door locked, she

applied to her neighbour to know the reason, and was told that Mrs. Wynne had sent for her; but it was all right; the baby had slept like a top, and never cried once. Mrs. Dodd did not feel anxious; she fancied Mary had only just been called away, so she quietly unlocked her door and would have entered, when 'Oh! dear Mrs. Dodd, what's the matter?' said the neighbour, who had stayed chatting while the door was unlocked; for Mrs. Dodd had given a stifled cry, and turned a ghastly face towards her. The two women rushed into the room: the one, gasping for breath, staggered back to the door; the other (can you guess which?) blindly stumbling towards the bed where the child lay, and dragging from thence a little senseless bundle. The whole room was filled, not with common air, but with something terribly suffocating. Mary reached the threshold to see her mother carried out in a fainting state, with little Harry dead in her arms. 'Quite dead!' the neighbours said, and shook their heads over the pretty pale darling.

'What is it? who did it?' cried poor Mary. 'Oh, fetch the doctor, some one. I never meant to leave him! Give him to me, my own boy!'

Some one had fetched the doctor, and he took the poor child in his arms, ordering remedies in a quiet, decided tone, which gave Mary one gleam of hope. He had previously looked in at the open door, pronounced the one word 'Gas!' and desired a man to go in and discover where the escape was. All the gas in the barracks was turned off at the meter at ten o'clock every night, and turned on again at five the next evening. It was easy to see that in the Dodd's room the gas had been blown out by some chance, and not turned off overnight; consequently, when the full flow of gas came on at the usual hour, it had poured into the room, to the great danger of its only occupant, the sleeping child.

But little Harry was not dead: by the greatest care and attention he was brought round to smile once again on his mother and Mary. Such a terrible hour of anxiety before this came to pass Mary had never known in her life. No one reproached her, but she felt as if she must die, too, if Harry did. It flashed upon her then, as clear as daylight, how wrong she had been in leaving her charge. At the moment her desire to go out had led her to give too much weight to Mrs. Wynne's wishes; but she well knew now, that if she had sent word that her mother had desired her not to leave Harry, Mrs. Wynne would soon have found some one else for the work.

Mrs. Wynne, and even Mrs. Dodd, did not seem to think her to blame: nay, poor Mrs. Wynne felt as if she was the cause of the accident; but Mary was too honest to allow this. 'It's all my fault, mother,' she said, with a burst of tears. 'I'm a bad girl; but I did not mean to hurt Harry. I ought not to have left him, but I wanted to go out, and he seemed so safe in bed. Please forgive me.'

It was useless talking of forgiving Mary when little Harry suddenly began to take notice, and lifted his arms weakly towards her, to be taken by her; even forsaking his mother for her. It was some time before he quite recovered from the effects of the partial suffocation he had undergone, but all the time Mary was his faithful little nurse.

A year later, when Harry was bigger and stronger, and able to do for himself, as Mrs. Dodd expressed it, Mary became Mrs. Wynne's second nurse. Mary's honesty in owing to her fault that October evening had so pleased Mrs. Wynne, that she had never lost sight of her, and as soon as Mrs. Dodd could spare her she had willingly taken her into her own nursery. Mary is very proud of Master Lionel and her own special charge, Master George; but in her heart of hearts she hardly thinks, for loveliness and beauty, either of them come up to her recollections of little Harry's babyhood. H. A. F.

MAN AND MONKEY.



MONKEYS are strange caricatures of men. In our picture we have a German who has taken his pet monkey with him to a restaurant. He has had his own tumbler, we will hope of only sugar and water, and the monkey appears to be fishing out the remains of sugar from the bottom of the glass, while his master is arranging for something for him to eat. The waiter, who is not accustomed to such guests, is full of anxiety to please, and is stating what there is in the house, with the usual twirling of the fingers, which has been described as 'washing your hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water.'

The monkey in the picture handles the tumbler skilfully, and even if he had drunk the whole contents of it, he would not have been the first of his family that has done so. There is in the Zoological Gardens in London an Andaman monkey which smokes a pipe, and drinks some grog with it! It is certain, though, that this monkey never got tipsy, for if he ever had taken too much, or had been given too much, he would never have touched grog again.

I have read of a monkey which some cruel, cowardly fellows took to a public-house and gave it spirits till it was tipsy, when it jumped about in a queer way, which they thought amusing. A few days afterwards they went to the public-house again, and took the money with them, but as soon as Pug saw the glasses he skipped out of the door and was on the roof of the house in a twinkling; and nothing would tempt him to come down, and there his owners had to leave him till they went home, whither he in due time followed them.

What a blessing it would be in many a home, if men would learn this monkey's lesson, and refuse to touch that drink which they have so often found to cause them misery and pain! How strange it is that though a man has found that wine 'biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder,' nevertheless, no sooner has he recovered from the wretched effects of his excess in drink, than he says to himself, 'I will seek it yet again' (Prov. xxiii. 35). Would that every man were as wise as a monkey!

In all your transactions, remember the final account.



Man and Monkey.

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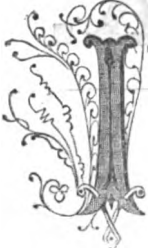
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Chatterbox.



Children in Donkey-cart, by F. W. KEYES by Google

CHILDREN IN DONKEY-CART.




T was blowing a cold, bitter wind when I met the little group, whose picture you see, in the street at Eastbourne. They were anxiously looking for their mother and a lame man, who were offering mushrooms for sale to the visitors at the houses close by. They came from some wild common in Sussex, where they eked out a poor and precarious livelihood in the best way they could. The only apology for having enclosed so many of the lovely and picturesque commons of England, with their blooming heather, yellow gorse, and green ferns, is, that it did away with a good many of the somewhat lawless people who lived on their borders, whose lazy habits did no good to themselves or the State. In the time of Queen Elizabeth (I think) Tressor already wrote rhymes on farming, in which he strongly contrasts the superiority of the severall (or the man who lives on enclosed land) over the commoner, at whom and his ravening curs he looks with no favourable eye.

It seems a pity that so many things which delight the painter are of so little use to others. However, let us hope that enough has been enclosed, and that what there is left of commons may be kept to refresh the jaded eyes and weary brains of the townsman. Meanwhile let us wish our little people in their cart a speedy journey home, and a good tea, with a rasher of bacon, over a comfortable peat-fire in their cottage.

'THE SPARROWS SAW IT.'

(Continued from page 4.)

CHAPTER II.



ANY years have now passed away. Grass has grown over Heinrich's theft,—thick grass. In the trouble and sorrow which at that time followed that early death no one had discovered it. And, as Frau Schröder never mentioned the bunch of grapes to Adelheid, she too was silent about it. Heinrich had forgotten his wicked action, but, alas! he did not stop at that one evil deed. He is fond of eating nice things, and will take them when he can—if no one sees him. He has so long given way to this and many other wicked ways, that sin to him seems no longer sin. He had no longer any conflict with his conscience, the voice in him which called 'You are doing wrong,' became weaker and weaker, he took and ate, he did what he liked, and felt quite content with himself afterwards.

Yes, grass has grown over his conscience, and it is growing on the churchyard too. But it does not cover Minna's grave only, her father the tradesman Schröder, is long since dead too. He always hoped to become a prosperous man, but every year he paid out a little more than he received, so after

his death it was discovered that he was quite poor, the business had to be sold to pay his debts.

We find Frau Schröder again in a mean lodging. The room is small and low, but everything is kept clean and neat. Heinrich has become tall and strong; he is now fifteen years old. To-day he has been confirmed: in the Bible which has been given him his pastor has written on the fly-leaf, 'Enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; but strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it.' Then the pastor spoke many good words to him, exhorting him to be a support and comfort to his mother. Heinrich was touched and made good resolutions, but he was vexed because the clergyman addressed more serious words to him than to the others, he thought that now he had passed the age for being talked to and admonished. He was big enough, and he would now take care of himself; no one need trouble himself about him, he would go straight enough—'Do right and fear no one,' that should be his motto.

But the 'fear of God' he left quite out of the question. Heinrich never liked to think about God, and he thought in his heart he could get on well enough without Him.

It is the last Sunday afternoon that Frau Schröder has her son with her for the whole day. Early tomorrow he is to enter on his apprenticeship to a tradesman. At night he is to sleep at his mother's lodging, and she is to provide him with clothes. This will be hard enough for her, for she lives almost entirely by the work of her hands, and these hands often give her great pain, for they are cramped by rheumatism.

The next morning Heinrich went to his new post; he had really made a resolution to behave uprightly, to learn honourably, and then to become an honest tradesman. 'Do right!' was his motto. All the business which his master intrusted to him he performed quickly and punctually. When he came home in the evening he was able to tell his mother that his employer was contented with him. Herr Winter had patted him on the shoulder and said, 'Only continue as you have begun, and you will soon get on.'

Heinrich at first had only very small and humble duties to perform; but now he was allowed to stand behind the counter and sell to the customers. This was much pleasanter than rolling casks and corking bottles. But take care, Heinrich, 'do right.' First it is comfits, sugar-candy, and suchlike things, which look so tempting to him. And Heinrich has never prayed, 'Lead us not into temptation,' so he yields whenever he is tempted by his desires. Now and then he takes a handful of sweet-meats, a couple of lumps of sugar out of the canister, when no one sees him, then he eats them secretly; what is the harm, in the shop the chests and canisters are all so full?

Heinrich was often sent with goods to the customers' houses, and there a groschen or two was sometimes given him.

'Save your money,' his mother said to him, 'or give it to me; I will keep it for you. You will soon want a new coat, and I cannot buy you one.'

Heinrich, too, was willing to do this, and he beheld his treasure increase with joy; he already had a dollar, he showed it quite proudly to one of his comrades, who, the same evening, wished him to accompany him to a public-house and drink a glass of beer. Heinrich at first declined: he knew how needful his dollar was to him, and wished to keep his money.

'It shall cost you nothing,' said his companion, 'I will treat you! I can afford to pay for two glasses of beer!'

Heinrich went with him to-day, and again to-morrow, soon every evening, after the shop was shut. But he had to pay for a great deal more than a glass of beer. There were many idle young men there playing at cards; they did not play high, but Heinrich almost always lost; his dollar was long since gone, and he was in his companion's debt, but he had no money and his mother had none either.

His mother! Oh, he would gladly not have seen her at all; he was ashamed that she should see him! When she inquired and complained because he now always came home late at night, he had excuses ever ready: at last he completely avoided her so that she could ask him no question. He had no longer his Sundays at liberty to be with her; he *must* now do what his wicked companions ordered him, for he owed them money, and they threatened him with all sorts of penalties if he did not pay his debts.

What was he to do?

So much money passed every day through his hands; he put it into the till. . . . No one would notice if he kept back a few pieces—no one. Heinrich hesitated for a few days, but his creditors would have their money. Oh! had he only gone to his employer, and openly confessed to him what he had done, he would probably have been helped. But the man who does not fear God is very much afraid of men; he is a coward.

And one day, when Heinrich was quite alone in the shop, he suddenly plunged his hand into the till, took some money out, put it into his pocket, looked timidly round him—no—no one had seen him—no one.

In the evening he counted up his money beneath a gas-lamp in a remote street; it was more than a dollar. He hastens to his comrades in the public-house, he pays his creditors, but he is not happy.

'Why, Schröder, where have you got the money so suddenly from?' asked one of them; 'yesterday you had none. Have you stolen it?'

Heinrich jumped up. 'Where I got it from is no affair of yours; you are paid now, and ought to be satisfied,' he said violently, and then quickly drank his beer and went home.

But it was not long before he was back at the public-house again. He soon had fresh debts, but they did not cause him so much anxiety as at the first time. There was plenty more money where he had found the first, and it was easier to take it now. Nobody saw him, not even a sparrow. And his heart no longer beat as heavily as a hammer when he did it; besides, Heinrich always took only a little, just a few groschen which did not make his master poor, he thought.

'But, Heinrich, these groschen made you poor, they robbed you of all joy in life, of your good conscience, of your clear eye, and, finally, perhaps, of your soul's salvation.'

Thus a long period passed away: at last Heinrich regularly took a couple of groschen out of the till every day; he scarcely ever thought now of its being wrong to do so. No, it seemed to him as if the money was his by right, as if he were only taking what belonged to him. His conscience was quite frozen: sin was deeply rooted in his heart. One only anxiety he had, lest any one should see him! And in this he seemed to be favoured. No one yet had surprised him in his evil actions.

But he was not so thoroughly unsuspected as he imagined. His master had been watching him for some time. He knew that Heinrich went to drink beer every evening in the public-house: he knew that his mother could not give him money to pay for it, where then could Heinrich get the money from? The tradesman watched his apprentice more sharply; he began to suspect that he stole out of the till; soon his suspicion changed into certainty. But he had no proofs, he had never caught Heinrich in the act yet; so Herr Winter was silent, and waited till he could seize him in the very act of theft. Heinrich had no suspicion of all this.

One day Herr Winter took several pieces of money and cut little marks upon their edges; then he put them into the till. He remained in the shop as long as purchasers were there, and watched to see whether any of the marked pieces were given in change. No. Now the shop was empty. Heinrich was there alone. Herr Winter went across the street to say a few words to a neighbour, meanwhile he kept his eye on the shop-door; no one went in. He came back and found Heinrich busily employed weighing sugar. As something was wanted he sent him out to fetch it; as soon as he was gone Herr Winter opened the till—several of the pieces which he had marked were missing, Now the thief came back.

'Schröder, you have robbed me, you have stolen money from me to-day, and often before. Confess it,'

But Heinrich denied with a brazen forehead and great insolence. Herr Winter thrust his hand in his pocket and threw several pieces of money on the table.

'Where did you get the money from? Where did you get *this* money from? Look! scarcely an hour ago I put this, and this, and this piece with the mark on it into the till, and now—how did they come into your pocket?'

But Heinrich denied obstinately, and when Herr Winter wished to prove that he had put that very money in the till, he said he did not believe him.

This was too much for his master. 'What more have I got to prove to you, you wretched thief?' he said angrily. 'Now you shall not remain another hour in my house; pack up your things at once, and be off. If it were not out of respect for your late father and your honest mother, I would give you in charge to the police. However, though you have got off free this time, believe me, if you continue on this road, you will end your days in prison or on the gallows. One begins with little sins, and ends with great ones. And now leave my house instantly.'

(To be continued.)



THE DOVE.

WHEN summer skies were softly fair
 Amid the clustering leaves,
 Which hung their drapery of green
 Beneath the hanging eaves,
 There came a dove with glossy wings,
 And low and soothing song,
 That charmed my ear and thrilled my heart
 All the glad summer long.
 And when the autumn winds blew chill,
 When winter's sky grew dim,
 That dove beside my window-pane
 Murmured her gentle hymn.

The birds that warbled gayer songs,
 To summer lands had flown,
 And the sweet dove, amid the storms,
 Now sung her songs alone.

The Spirit of the blessed One
 Who gave his life for thee,
 Dwelling within thy glad young heart;
 That Dove of peace will be.

When fades the light of early hope,
 When pleasure plumes her wing,
 That Dove, within thy sorrowing soul,
 Will pause and sweetly sing.



American Huntsman.

BUFFALO HUNTING.

AS the birds hasten from zone to zone according to the changes of the seasons, so does the bushy-haired bison or buffalo wander northward from the plains of Texas at the beginning of spring, till the autumn storms warn him of the approach of a hard, bitter winter, and drive him from the Canadian territories back towards the south. As various as the enemies of the buffaloes are the means which they use to capture them; the most successful kind of buffalo-hunting is that of the Prairie Indians; it requires, too, all the strength and skill of both horses and riders. On their swift, hardy horses, which mostly have been caught wild on the steppes, the Indians are able to

overtake any wild animal on the plains; but they take a particular pride in sending their shots, whether bullets or arrows, down from their horses, among a flying herd of buffaloes. They dispense with everything which may hinder themselves or their horses; both clothes and saddles are left behind, and they only provide themselves with a long rein of rough leather, a bow which they carry in their left hand, or sometimes between their teeth, and as many arrows as it is possible to take with them; in the right hand, the huntsman swings a heavy whip, by which he urges his horse close up to the side of a fat buffalo. The well-trained horse does not then require any further guidance; he understands his rider's intentions, and, while he keeps pace with the selected prey, the huntsman soon finds an opportunity of sending an arrow up to the feathers, into the side of his victim. Scarcely has the bow been drawn or the rifle cracked, scarcely has the sharp iron or the round lead penetrated through the thick wool into the fat flesh, than

the horse by a mighty bound escapes from the side of the wounded animal, that he may not be gored by its horns, while the huntsman seeks out a new victim.

Frequently, however, the horse fails to escape, and, with his flanks torn open, or his shoulder shattered, rolls together with rider and buffalo in one heap on to the ground: in such cases, the Indian has his own skillfulness to thank if he escapes unharmed.

Thus, with eager haste the chase is pursued over the plains, till lack of arrows or the exhaustion of his horse warns the huntsman that he must give over for to-day. The wounded buffaloes have meanwhile been separated from the herd, and lie exhausted or dying on the plains.

The huntsmen's wives have followed their traces on horseback, in order to kill the victims completely, to cut them up and bring the best pieces together with their skins to the wigwams, where the flesh is cut into thin strips and dried, and the skins dressed. The greater portion of the slaughtered beasts naturally falls to the wolves, who are generally found at no great distance in the track of the buffaloes, and through the report of the rifles and the thundering roar of the fleeing herd are enticed from a long way off.

Sometimes the Indian succeeds in doing great mischief among the buffaloes even without his horse. Disguising his whole body in a wolf's skin, or a woollen covering, and taking exact notice of the direction of the wind, he creeps on hands and knees up to a quietly grazing herd of buffaloes. Blinded by their long hair and manes, bisons trust only to their sharp organ of smell and do not regard the strange object which is approaching them, so long as he does not show the form and upright position of a man. Thus a skilful huntsman may long remain among a scattered herd and kill many of them, if a stream of air does not betray him to the sharp scent of some watchful member of the herd: neither the whistling of the arrow, nor the report of the rifle will do it. Even the death groan of a mortally wounded comrade will only cause one of them here and there to raise his huge head for a moment, and then go on grazing as before. If, however, any of the beasts, excited to fury at an expected danger, approach the concealed huntsman, whom they probably take for a wolf, he has only to show his full figure, and by changing his position let the wind blow from him to them, to cause first a few members, and then the whole herd to tear away in wild panic from the spot.

In winter, too, the poor bisons are pursued by their foes, the Indians, to whom they then fall still easier victims. Indeed, a complete war of extermination has been carried on against the race of buffaloes, which, it is said, will soon become almost extinct.

American huntsmen chase and capture the buffalo in a somewhat different way from the Indians. They generally arm themselves with lances as well as rifles, as we see in the picture.

J. F. C.

MY ALARM-CLOCK.

AN alarm-clock not only tells the time of day, but it can also wake people up in the morning. I have such a clock in my chamber. Every morning about five o'clock it sets up such a whizzing and a

ringing that it wakes me up. 'What a good way to be roused up!' some of my little readers will say. Yes, it is a very good way, *if I always get up when it wakes me.* But last summer, one morning, instead of getting up when my clock woke me, I turned over and went to sleep again. The next morning I did the same thing, and in the course of a few days my clock, though it made as loud a noise as ever, would not wake me. 'Why? how strange!' you will say. Strange or not, yet it is true: my clock would not wake me any longer,—it would not wake me, because I did not get out of bed these two or three mornings. I had formed the habit of neglecting it.

I have often thought that my alarm-clock was very much like one's conscience: so much like it, that you might call everybody's conscience their alarm-clock. Every young person who knows God's will has such an alarm-clock in his own breast: so that, whenever he is going to do wrong, 'whiz,' 'whiz,' goes the alarm-clock, saying, 'That is not right: you must not do that: God sees you.' I suppose every reader has had his conscience checking him as he was about to do wrong. And if it were not for one's conscience, there is no telling what awful sins we should commit. *If it were not for conscience, we should all just as soon commit murder as not.* How important it is to have a conscience that always tells us when we do wrong, and that checks us when we are going to do wrong!

But we must hear conscience when it speaks. If we always stop when conscience says stop; if we always do what it tells us to do, then we shall always *hear* it, and by the help of the Holy Spirit it will keep us from sinning. But, if we get into the habit of not doing what conscience tells us to do, after a while we shall not hear it at all; our conscience will become hardened, and we shall be ready to commit any sin, however great.

In the town in which I live, there is a boy now in jail, for breaking into a shop at night and stealing money. This boy once went to a Sunday-school, and, perhaps, had as faithful a conscience as any boy that reads this paper. But he commenced *doing* wrong in little things. His conscience used to say to him, 'Robert, that is wrong: you ought not to do that.' But he did not obey his conscience. He went on doing worse and worse, until, as I have said, he is now in jail for stealing money. Remember that you always get up when the alarm-clock wakes you. Whenever your conscience tells you to do any thing, *do it*; and whenever it tells you to stop, *stop*. Try to have your conscience instructed by the Bible, and then *always obey it.*—*Child's Paper.*

LITTLE LUCY.

SHE carries the warm sunshine
Where'er her footsteps go,
She has no claims to beauty,
She is not fair, I know;
Eyes like the blue of spring-time,
Locks with the sunset's gold,
Or raven eyes and tresses,
Are not her treasures told.

But faith and love go with her,
And busy willing hands—
These are her simple treasures,
Much prized in many lands;
She will hold them when the winter
Of age shall frost her bloom;
And they will leave sweet memories,
When she slumbers in the tomb.

She has learned the simple lesson
Which older people slight—
That behind the thickest darkness
The sun is always bright;
That our griefs are like a twilight
Which is swift to fade away—
Oh, would we all could see it
As we pass upon our way!



A GENEROUS TURK.

A CRIMINAL at Damascus was condemned to death, and was led to the place of execution to undergo the sentence of the law. With death so near, the sad and painful thought oppressed his soul, that since his condemnation he had not once seen his wife and children, and had not been able to take leave of them. Then lifting up his hands he exclaimed—'Oh, is there not among the many who stand here one generous heart, who will be surety for me, so that I may go and see my wife and children once more before I die?'

The cart upon which the criminal sat stopped, and there was solemn silence among the multitude of people which had assembled. The imploring, earnest cry of the unhappy man had struck many. The hearts of all were deeply affected by it.

Suddenly a Turk of noble birth stepped from out of the crowd, and inquired of the criminal, 'Where is your family?'

'Salahije,' he replied.

'How much time do you think you will require to see your family once more?' asked the Turk further.

'An hour,' replied the condemned, 'at the longest.'

'And you will return here again in an hour?'

'Yes, I will,' exclaimed the criminal.

'And you,' said the Turk, now turning to the executioner, 'will wait an hour for the execution?'

'I am allowed to do so,' answered he. 'But,' he added, in a decided tone, 'reflect well on what you are about to do! If he does not return, in that case I must strike off your head instead of his.'

'I trust him,' said the noble Turk. 'Set him free, and bind me! I am content that it should be to me as you have said.'

Amazed, and yet with sympathy, the crowd gazed at him who had shown such generosity. The criminal's chains were loosened, and fastened on the Turk. The criminal was soon out of sight. The bystanders now were full of anxiety and fear, which became more and more intense as the hour slipped fast away.

'Will he keep his word?' some whispered. Others

prayed to God for the innocent man, whose head must fall if the criminal proved faithless.

The condemned man ran swiftly to Salahije. Once more weeping he pressed his wife and children to his breast, then he tore himself from them, and hastened back to the place where the procession had halted and waited for him. But on the way evil thoughts came into his mind. Should he not save his life and flee into the mountains? He stood still for a while, but then his better feelings gained the mastery. 'He has taken my place, relying on my truth! No!' he exclaimed, 'he has shown such noble generosity, I dare not be faithless to him.'

The taking leave of his family had been very hard and sad to him, and had kept him longer time than he had intended, and this hesitation, too, during the struggle between truth and dishonour in his heart, had taken up a few of the precious minutes.

'The hour is gone,' said the stern executioner to the noble substitute. 'You have made yourself the surety for an unworthy man, and you must die in his place!'

The procession now moved slowly on to the place of execution, amid the weeping and lamentation of the crowd. Even the executioner was inwardly moved to mercy, but the judgment had been pronounced, the order had been given to him; he dared not set the prisoner free.

More slowly than at other times the procession moved on to the place of execution. Many eyes, indeed, were often anxiously turned back, but he whom they expected came not. The hope of the deliverance of the innocent man, who had trusted to the honour and truth of the criminal, gradually faded away. And now they had come to the place of execution. The noble-hearted surety was being stripped to the waist; his neck was already laid bare, when a piercing shriek was heard in the distance. 'Stop! stop!' cried the people, and the executioner let the sword sink back into its scabbard.

'Yes, it is he! it is he!' cried the people with joy. The condemned man rushed breathless into the midst of the crowd.

'Set him free!' he cried, when still far off; 'here am I! Execute me!'

But the executioner was as deeply affected as the multitude which surrounded him. He loosed the bonds of the noble Turk, at whose feet the condemned man threw himself, and thanked him for his generosity. The executioner, however, did not bind the criminal, but said, 'Follow me to the Pacha.'

And they followed him, and the crowd followed them too, to the Pacha, to whom the executioner related all that had happened.

The Pacha turned to the condemned man, and said, 'Speak, why did you not use the chance which you had to set yourself free?'

The criminal threw himself down before the Pacha, and confessed that he had hesitated—that he had struggled with himself. 'But,' cried he, 'I could not and dared not repay the generosity of this noble man with such base ingratitude, and thus rob all Moslems of their trust in truth and honour.'

'You have spoken as bravely as you have acted,' said the Pacha, 'and now I, too, will show generosity. Go home, you are free! Your crime is pardoned.'



The Generous Turk.

This story of a Mahommedan Turk, showing | truth-loving man who was on the spot at the
such noble and loving generosity, is related by a | time.

'TOM'S SUPPER,' and 'CHATTERBOX,' No. I. may still be had, price One Penny.

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Chatterbox.



HAND SHADOWS.

IT is very good fun when the winter sets in,
When the lamp and the candles we really begin,
To learn to make shadows with hands on the wall;
From the first to the last it's a game fit for all.
The smallest wee child of but two years or three
Can be taught to make some as it sits on your knee;
While the older and wiser invent as they go,
And clever new shadows can frequently show.
And so innocent pleasures at home can be made,
Both real and substantial, from only a shade.

J. E. C. F.

'THE SPARROWS SAW IT.'

(Continued from page 11.)



HEINRICH, in your Bible it is written,
'Broad is the road which leadeth to
destruction, and many there be which
go in thereat.'

But the Bible was not in the bundle
which Heinrich now packed up in anger.
He demanded his papers from Herr
Winter. When his master looked into
his face, which showed neither repent-
ance nor shame, he wrote at the bottom
of the paper, 'Discharged for thieving.'

'You will never become a trades-
man, he said now; "with those papers
no one will take you as an apprentice.

It is my duty to others as well as to yourself not to
discharge you with a lie. Look about you, and try
to earn your bread in an honest way; and if you
want any advice, come to me.'

'You will wait a long time for that,' replied
Heinrich, and went his way.

These were his farewell words.

But whither should he go now? Far, far away
from here. In this town he would certainly get no
situation, for everybody would know the reason of his
dismissal, and no one would take a thief into their
house. But Heinrich did not call himself one. He
accused Herr Winter of being a sly, suspicious man,
who thought that every one was cheating him, and
who marked his money in order to try and entrap
his apprentices. Heinrich had done no harm at all;
Herr Winter was entirely to blame; it was his fault.

'Well, far away then!—the farther the better.'

Should he go to his mother first? No, he would
rather not. He would receive nothing from her but
reproaches, exhortations, and tears. She would learn
from Herr Winter what had happened; and when he
had found a good place, he would write and let her
know. Yes, that would be the best plan. And when
the image of his mother came so lovingly, yet so
seriously before his mind, he quieted his conscience
by thinking that his departure would make it easier
for her to live, and that she would no longer have to
provide for him. And so he went his way—whither?

When Heinrich did not come home that night,
Frau Schröder anxiously hastened next morning to
Herr Winter. She feared that her son had suddenly
been taken ill. But when his master told her what
had happened, she would much rather that he had

indeed been ill, than be obliged to hear what she did.
Quite overcome, she sank down upon a chair, and
could do nothing but groan out every now and then,
'Oh, my God! Oh, my God!'

And God alone it was Who remained the support
and comfort of the poor widow forsaken by her son.
Arrived at her home, she put on the black dress in
which she had mourned for her deceased husband.
Was not her son, too, dead to her?

Then Frau Schröder took down her Bible from the
shelf; she opened at the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's
Gospel, at the story of the prodigal son, at the verse,
'He sent him to his field to feed swine.' There she
made a broad mark. Yes, he had gone as far as that.
Oh, how she longed that the further part of that
story might be fulfilled in him!

CHAPTER III.

THE sun is setting; his beams are gilding the
broad sea with his 'good-night' kiss. We are on
the west coast of Schleswig, where, in a little island,
we find Heinrich Schröder again. He is very much
altered since we last saw him, for several years have
now passed. He has become much stronger and
taller; sun, wind, and weather have browned his face,
a moustache covers his lip: the boy has now become
a powerful young man. His path in life has been no
easy one, strewn with flowers; he has had to make
his way with difficulty—now with good, now with evil
fortune—now with much, now with little dishonesty.
He has been everything it was possible for him to be:
first a waiter in an inn, then a baker's apprentice;
then he tried to work as a clerk; but nothing seemed
to suit him: first the wages were too little, then the
work was too heavy, and the treatment he received
not kind enough. Now we find Heinrich a doctor's
coachman; he might well be satisfied, for it was a
good place; but he was not, for real contentment must
come from within—from the heart. Yes, Heinrich's
heart—that was still the same old one. However
much he might have changed outwardly, there was
still no inward change. He cheated his present mas-
ter only a little; he charged him only a few groschen
more for hay and such-like things than he had really
paid; and because he did not act worse than many
other people, he considered himself very honest and
upright. A thick coating of ice was formed round
his conscience, which is called self-righteousness.
When a block of ice cannot be melted by the warm
sunbeams, it must be broken by a strong blow.

Heinrich had not yet written to his mother; he
did not want to do so till he had become something
honest. The truth was, he was ashamed; for when
he thought of his youth, of his father's house, and
that he must now think himself fortunate in having
secured a coachman's place, he felt the degradation;
and a gentle inward voice told him how different every-
thing might have been had he remained with Herr
Winter. Should he now, should all his acquaintance
learn that he was at present a servant? No, never!

Heinrich lived by the sea-side—its restless waves
now foaming and roaring, and then so smooth and
clear, bright and shining like a mirror, just like a
human heart. Whoever has gazed seriously on the
vast deep abyss must have seen his own heart in it.
Heinrich often stood by the shore; but he saw nothing

but water there, he did not remark the constant change of colour and form, to him it was nothing more than the same tedious, wearisome water.

Well, to-day Heinrich was standing by the seashore,—there is a strong tide in the North Sea. The waves which now splashed Heinrich's feet, when the tide turned retreated to a long distance. The little ships and boats which were now tossing about on the restless water would then be left lying high and dry on the sand till several hours after the tide again came back to float them. Suddenly some one clapped Heinrich on the shoulder. It was his comrade, the coachman John, with whom he associated a great deal; he was a merry young fellow, whose cheerful disposition sparkled from his eyes.

'Do you know,' he cried to Heinrich, 'that to-morrow we have a holiday, we must do something out of the way, let us take a boat, we can both row, and go to the little island over there. I have long wished to see it closer.'

'Ah, there will be no fun there!' answered Heinrich. 'There is no dancing nor gambling, there is no public-house there,—nothing to see, nothing to eat, nothing to drink.'

'Oh, yes, I know there is plenty to see,' replied John: 'and do you think the people there would let us be hungry or thirsty? Oh, no! they would share the last thing they had with their guests.'

After some hesitation, Heinrich consented. It would not be more stupid there than elsewhere. So to-morrow afternoon the excursion was to be made. At the appointed hour both sat in their boat; at first they had to contend with an adverse wind, but before they reached the end of their voyage a regular calm came on. The retreating tide now overtook them, their boat grounded and they were obliged to cast anchor; they could not think of proceeding farther. And yet the distance which separated them from the island was so small, they could distinguish separate houses on it—could they not perform the short distance on foot? Now and then they would have to jump over a stream of water and to wade through thick mud, but what harm would that do them? The island was so close, they could not miss their way, in a quarter of an hour they must be there. The boat was securely anchored, and next morning early they could easily reach it in one of the boats of the island, forwards then! Without further reflection the two friends began their walk.

But a very few minutes after they had started a terrible fog enveloped them; so close and thick was it that they could not see a step before them. This sea-fog is common enough in these parts, but to-day it had come on very suddenly.

Perplexed and amazed, Heinrich and John looked at each other. Whither should they turn their steps? Both the land and their boat had vanished from their eyes, and yet it would be easier for them to reach the more distant land than to find the nearer boat again. If they only kept straight a-head they must in a short time arrive at the island.

So there was no cause for alarm, only forwards! But going forwards was more difficult than they had imagined. A stream of water barred their way, and though a few steps to the right it was narrow enough for them to have crossed it, our friends turned to

the left, and thus lost a quarter of an hour in seeking a place to get over it. By thus going backwards and forwards they could not help losing the direction in which they ought to proceed, each of them felt this with secret terror, at last it burst from Heinrich's breast, 'Do you know where the island lies? I do not know, I believe we have been going round in a circle.'

'I don't know either,' sighed John.

Again the wanderers proceeded on their way. They were obliged to take hold of each other's hands, lest they should be separated by the thick fog. Thus they went on further without knowing whether their way led them to a friendly island, or would deliver them up to the deadly embrace of the sea. Heinrich tried to hum a song, but the notes stuck in his throat, so both went silently onwards.

(To be continued.)



THE STARVING SOLDIER.

It was sleeting fast. Evening was falling. The streets of New York were almost deserted.

Suddenly a voice at my elbow said, 'I am not fit for work, and have eaten nothing to-day.'

I looked at the speaker. He was a strongly-built man, but had lost both arms by amputation: he was evidently a discharged soldier. He was pale, too, from recent sickness, or from scanty food. He had on an old, threadbare coat.

My first impulse was to give him something. But my coat was buttoned tight: I could not easily unbutton it, and hold my umbrella and book at the same time; and to crown all, the street car, for which I had been waiting, at that moment came up.

'I haven't anything to-day,' I said, turning away from the man, and beckoning to the driver.

I heard a sigh as I turned, and was on the point of giving him a coin, but I remembered that if I missed this car I should have to wait ten minutes in the road. 'Besides,' I said to myself, 'somebody else will be sure to give him something.'

But my heart smote me when, on looking after the man, I saw him go sadly down the street with bent head. Once I thought of stopping the car, overtaking the man, and giving him half a dollar. But while I hesitated, the car passed the corner, and he was out of sight. It was too late.

I did not eat my dinner that day with my usual appetite. I could not get that wan face out of my mind. At times the food seemed to choke me. What if he really were starving, and no one would help him!

All through the evening the man's look haunted me. In vain my little daughter, seeing me thoughtful, sang her sweet ballads. In vain my wife sought to 'cheer me up,' as she said. I even dreamed of the man. If I had known where to find him, I would have gone the next day to satisfy myself that he had received assistance.

But the impression gradually wore off. There is so much suffering now in great cities, that almost every one becomes hardened to it. I persuaded



The Starving Soldier.

myself that the man had been helped by others. 'There are so many societies to aid soldiers,' I said. It was uncomfortable to think otherwise.

One morning, about four days after the interview, my wife was reading the paper, when she suddenly laid it down and cried, 'How shocking!'

I do not know how it was, but I felt a sudden chill. I thought instantly of that man's wan face. But I said carelessly, as I cracked the shell of my egg,—

'What is it, my dear?'

'Oh! such a horrible story. A discharged soldier, his wife and two children, dying of starvation. At least the wife is dead, and one of the children not expected to live. None of them have had anything to eat for four days. They were found in an old out-house. The man is said to have lost both arms at Gettysburg.'

My hand trembled so much that long before my wife finished I had been compelled to lay down my egg. She was looking at the paper and did not see me.



Michael Angelo.

I had no appetite after that. I hastened into the city, for I was sure this was the man whose petition I had rejected.

I went straight to see him. I had the newspaper in my pocket, and it directed me to the miserable outhouse where the sufferers had been found.

Quite a crowd had been collected outside. But a policeman at the door permitted no one to go in. He knew me, however, and on my expressing my wish, allowed me to enter.

A sheet, furnished by some poor neighbour, was spread over a still, waxen face in the corner; a little girl was sobbing beside it; and a man bowed with grief sat at the foot. At the sound of my footsteps he looked up. It was the same wan face I had repelled at the corner of the street.

Since that day I have never refused at least to give bread to those who so plainly needed it, as that poor soldier did. And in spite of much that is wisely said about 'the plague of beggars,' who make a trade of it, I think it better to give to many who are unworthy,

than to refuse one that is really in need; and better still to obey the inward prompting of the Holy Spirit, moving us to gentle charity, than to mourn at last over a lost opportunity which no regrets can ever bring to us again.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

THIS great sculptor, architect, and painter, was born A.D. 1474, in the neighbourhood of Florence. His great genius showed itself in his earliest childhood. The ruler of Tuscany, Lorenzo de Medici, a great patron of the arts, was so pleased with the boy's simple manners, as well as by his devotion to art, that he invited him to reside entirely in his house, where he remained three years, treated with the greatest kindness. On Lorenzo's death, his brother Pietro con-

tinued to patronise Michael Angelo, but in a different spirit. Treating art as a toy, he employed the artist during a severe winter to make a statue of snow. Owing to his bad government Pietro was driven from Florence in 1494.

A few years later, Michael Angelo made the celebrated statue of a 'sleeping Cupid,' which was sent to Rome, where, without the sculptor's consent, it was shown as a piece of sculpture which had been dug up from a vineyard and pronounced to be a genuine antique, superior to anything which the art of the day had been able to produce. When the trick was known, Michael Angelo's reputation was so increased by it, that he was invited to Rome, where he devoted himself to close study, and executed several marvellous works. By the novelty and grandeur of his style he created quite a new era in the arts. He designed the celebrated Church of St. Peter's at Rome, the largest and grandest in the world, as well as the magnificent monument for Pope Julius II.'s tomb.

While this latter work was in progress, his patron, the same Pope, delighted to come and inspect it, but it was interrupted by an accident which strongly marks the character of the artist. Having twice called upon his Holiness and not been able to obtain admission, and imagining that he had been rudely treated by an officer in attendance, he told his servants to sell his goods to the Jews, and at once started for Florence. Five couriers from the Pope hastened after him, to command his immediate return, but the great sculptor was inflexible and continued his journey. Arrived at Florence he was summoned by the Pontiff to return to Rome. At last he yielded to persuasion. The Pope received him angrily; the artist excused himself, saying, that after his faithful services to his Holiness, he could not submit to the indignity of being denied admission to him. A bishop in attendance observed to the Pope that such persons, however expert in their profession, were usually ignorant of everything else. 'Who told thee to interfere?' said Julius, bestowing a hearty blow with his staff on the bishop's shoulders, and commanding Michael Angelo to kneel, he gave him his benediction and received him into full favour.

The great artist now commenced one of his grandest works, the painting of the roof of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, which he completed in a year and eight months. When Raphael saw it, struck with admiration, he immediately changed his own style, and, with the candour of a great mind, thanked God that he had been born in the same age with so great an artist. The next Pope, Leo X., treated Michael Angelo badly, and during his whole pontificate we cannot but read with surprise and indignation that this extraordinary man was employed in hewing rocks and excavating a road for the conveyance of marble from the quarries. Afterwards he withdrew to Venice, where he designed the Rialto Bridge. Returned to Rome he finished Julian II.'s monument, and proceeded with his picture of the Last Judgment, also for the Sistine Chapel, an immense work which occupied him eight years.

The career of Michael Angelo is an example of the splendid results produced by great powers when joined with great opportunities.

The closing years of his life were occupied in the construction of the magnificent fabric of St. Peter's Church. He was able also to direct fortifications, adorn the Capitol with superb buildings, finish the Farnese Palace, and design other works, though harassed by the opposition of his enemies and rivals. Old age with its infirmities came upon him, but he retained the vigour of his mental faculties to the end. He died A.D. 1563, in his 89th year. His last words were, 'In your passage through this life remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ.' He was buried at Rome, but his remains were afterwards removed to the Church of Sta. Croce at Florence, where so many of the great men of Italy have found their last resting-place.

J. F. C.

A LECTURE ON A BRIDGE.

A GENTLEMAN who very recently made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Washington was about crossing the bridge which spans the Potomac when he came up with a Negro in a waggon, with whom he bargained to be taken over for the sum of five cents. The Negro desired payment in advance. The gentleman, who had noticed a saloon near by, being suspicious that the Negro was thirsty, asked why he desired his money before he had earned it.

'Dar's whisky over dar, massa,' answered the Negro, pointing towards the saloon; 'and I'se gwoin to drop in.'

'No, you don't, my friend; at least, not with my money,' returned the stranger, with an emphasis that half took the Negro's breath away.

'But I'se very hot, massa,' urged the Negro.

'Yes, and by-and-bye you will be very cold. When you are hot you take whisky to cool you; and when you are cool you take whisky to warm you. Is it not so?'

'Jes so, zactly, massa. Yah! yah!'

'Now I know all about it, my friend. I used to be a tippler myself, and it was only through God's mercy that I was not utterly ruined. As it was, it brought me and my family to poverty and disgrace. If you will drive on, I will give you ten cents instead of the five I bargained for.'

After a wistful, hesitating look towards the saloon, the Negro concluded to proceed. He could not always earn ten cents; but he could almost always get whisky. So he shouted, 'Go 'lang, Nellie,' and the beast began to move forward.

'My friend,' said the the stranger, 'it is not at all probable that you and I will ever meet again in this world; and as we part at the edge of this bridge, I have a duty to perform. I wish you to promise me, here and now, that you will never take another drop of liquor as long as you live. Whisky stole my brains and purse away, and it will steal yours as well. It left me without friends, or bread, or self-respect. But look at me now. I'm not a handsome man; but I am an honest and true one, with a respectable family, and a home where peace and plenty abide. Would this have been my condition had I continued to drink liquor? Is it yours?'

'No, massa; I'se a poor man, dat's a fact.'

'How can you be otherwise than poor so long as

you drink up your half-dimes before they are earned. Have you a family ?

'Yes, sah.'

'Well, here are your ten cents ; and can you promise me to buy a loaf of bread with it for the little ones ?'

'Yes, sir,' drawing his sleeves across his eyes.

'And you will always think of what I have said when you cross this bridge, and when you are tempted to drink whisky ?'

'Yes, sah. I never saw it dis way before.'

'Good-bye, then, and God help you.'

The men shook hands and parted.—*American Paper.*

CLEVER CATS.

A CAT-FANCIER relates,—'In the town where I lived a whole colony of mice was discovered in the roof of the house of one of my friends. The impertinent little animals were naturally condemned to death. The mistress of the house, however, interceded for the smallest, which grew up and flourished under care ; it soon got to know its benefactor, and even the most nervous of her lady-friends gradually overcame their horror of mice so far as regarded this pet. A large glass vessel was appointed for the little founding's dwelling. Frequently in the evening, when the mistress of the house sat at her work-table, the mouse was allowed to walk about alone.

At first it cost the family cat much self-control not to spring upon the mouse, but a word from her mistress was enough, and the claws were drawn in. At last, after a severe struggle, she obtained a complete victory over herself. She no longer made any attempt to injure her mistress's little favourite, she learned to understand that this mouse, and this one alone, she was to spare. Nay, strange to say, Puss's innate hatred was changed into love for the tiny mouse. Purring happily she would lie on the window-ledge, and with half-open eyes follow all the movements. Now the mouse walked down the lady's dress on to the floor. The cat gets up and approaches it, then she lies stretched out in the middle of the room, the lady, rather alarmed at this, thinks the cat has got some evil intention, and gently admonishes her. The cat still follows the mouse with her eyes. Now it is again at the work-table, and the cat has taken up her old post at the window. It is now clear that the cat is far from wishing to take the mouse's life, but rather is desirous of acting as a mother towards it. But it is only towards *this* mouse that she shows her love, nearly every day, she mews at the door as before, desiring to obtain admission, that she may be praised by her mistress for the capture of a mouse which she holds in her mouth : when she has heard the words 'Good Puss,' she retires into a corner to consume her prey.

'Nearly four months of this quiet life had passed away, the mouse had quite grown up, but had been guilty of various mischievous nibblings peculiar to its race. At last the lady, with great reluctance, determined to give the mouse its liberty. And in order to give it a good chance of future existence it was put into a hole in the wall of the court-yard communicating with

a barn full of corn. The outcast was naturally thought of with sorrow ; the lady not quite free from sundry pangs of conscience was again sitting at her work-table, when she heard the cat mew at the door. She brought in a mouse, she was praised as usual, but this time she did not go off with it, but walked into the room, jumped upon the window-ledge where she deposited her prey—not her mouse this time, but her mistress's darling, perfectly unhurt, just as well as when it had been turned out some hours previously. Naturally enough after this it continued to be the pensioner of the family.'

Another patron of and admirer of cats tells us how his cat would always bring him the mice and rats she had caught—even into his bed sometimes—and would not eat them till she had received his approval and commendation. 'Her sense of dignity was so great, that after I had beaten her for a fault, it was a long time before she would play with me again. Time and kind words alone would conciliate her.

'I once changed my place of residence ; as I had to go some distance by the railway, I did not care to have the trouble of taking Puss with me, so I gave her to a friend, who lived some three miles off. She was wrapped up in a cloth and put in a basket, so could have no knowledge of the journey which she had to take to her new home. In scarcely an hour and a half she was back again at my house. She had made her way through the most crowded streets, across the Elbe, over a long railway-bridge, and through a large open square, in order to reach her old home. When we remember how a cat is attacked on all sides in a public street by boys and dogs, teased and tormented in every possible way, we must allow that it was no easy feat for poor Puss. It is, however, a well-known fact, that cats can be carried far longer distances, and not see anything of the road, and yet safely find their way back again to their former home. This is owing neither to their sight nor sense of smell, both of which are defective, but to their wonderful instinct of locality.

J. F. C.

THE FIREMEN OF THE LAND.

ENGLAND, thou art justly proud
Of thy men so tried and brave !
Well thy voice may boast aloud
Of our Boatmen on the wave.
Gallant fellows ! well they grace
British song and Hero story :
They will take a foremost place
When Valour counts her troops of glory.

But our cities long have shown
Those that match the sailor-band ;
Courage nobly claims her own
In the Firemen of the Land.
Give them honour, give them fame,
God help the hands that fight the flame.
When the red sheet winds and whirls
In the coil of frightful death :
When the bannered smoke unfurls,
And the hot walls drink our breath ;



The Fireman.

When the far-off crowd appears
 Choking in the lurid glare,
 And some helpless form uprears
 In that furnace of despair :—
 'Save, oh save!' the people cry—

But who plucks the human brand?
 Who will do the deed or die?
 'Tis the Firemen of the Land.
 Then give them honour, give them fame,
 God help the hands that fight the flame.

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Chatterbox.



ST. KILDA SHEEP.



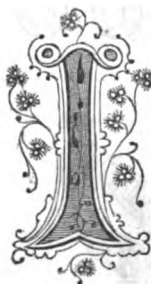
SOME years ago, I saw at the Zoological Gardens in a paddock, some quaint little animals bounding along at a tremendous pace. I could not make out what they were; they seemed to me a compound of goat, gazelle, and sheep. On inquiry I found that they were the sheep of St. Kilda, a rocky island far out at sea, off the west coast of Scotland; the home, alike of the eagle, of countless sea birds, and of these little sheep. I fear there are not many of them left now, as larger and more profitable breeds are said to have been introduced. Hearing from the late Mr. Mitchell (then the Secretary of the Zoological Society) that they were likely to die from dysentery, which the damp gardens had given them, I bought two ewes and two lambs. One ewe and one lamb I had killed as they were past recovery. The other ewe, which I called Norah, got well, and the little ram I took into my painting room, and succeeded in saving him. It was amusing to see how he liked the fire; he would stand for hours with his feet on the fender, warming himself. Sometimes he got up a sham-fight about a cabbage-leaf or a piece of carrot, with a young old-fashioned hound, I happened to be rearing at the same time.

Master Billy grew impudent, and at times would repay my kindness to him by backing about six yards, and then, with a run and a jump, give me as hard a blow as he could wherever he could catch me. He only meant that for play, as he was really much attached to me, because, when at the instance of a friend I got rid of him for various misdeeds to other people, he proved it by following me wherever I went at the busy railway-station. There was a little difficulty in getting a ticket for him, but I was ultimately allowed to take him with a dog ticket instead of hiring a whole truck. This transaction made me late, and the porters would not let me through to the train. As the delay arose from the railway people, I would not be stopped, but pressed through, and Billy followed like a bull-dog: if he had hindered me, I should not have got off. In the neighbourhood of Reigate he found a home, and he walked with me to it from the station for about three miles, and in the night. There he soon tried to make himself master of everything and everybody, and was nearly killed by a pony, with whose shins his horns had been making free. The pony took him up with his teeth, lifted him high up, and threw him down, and, if the coachman had not come to the rescue, he would have killed Billy by kneeling upon him. I could tell no end of his adventures and the trouble he gave to keep him within bounds and in peace. He used to fight a fallow-buck which was nearly twice his size; and he once felled a big countryman to the ground, by charging at him, while the former was kneeling down, and little suspecting the attack. A great many of his relations are alive now in a park in Essex, and Billy's horns are among my relics.

THINK nothing in conduct unimportant or indifferent.

'THE SPARROWS SAW IT.'

(Concluded from page 19.)



IT was growing darker, but the fog began to divide a little. But it only lifted its veil to disclose a terrible sight. The water-courses at the feet of the wanderers were broader and more frequent, they joined together too, and formed regular rivers. The tide was returning; slow indeed, but threatening certain death. Gently, gently,—slowly, slowly, the waters glided up to their victims, whose steps were ever quicker, but more fruitless. Wherever they turned—hither, thither—everywhere the waves were rolling onward, and seemed with their endless splash and roar to cry out mockingly, 'You are ours.' The fog dispersed almost as quickly as it had come on. But the last ray of daylight only showed John and Heinrich that they had no prospect of being saved. They saw the island indeed, but much further off than when they began their wandering. They saw the lights in the houses; there were they only kindled to light them to their horrible death?

When the two wanderers had cast a look around them, a piercing shriek of terror rent the air. But it seemed as if with that one cry they had exhausted all their strength. Pale and with tottering knees they stood there: John sobbed in the awful prospect of death, and still despairingly looked for some sign of deliverance. Oh, if only their cry had been heard in the island and its inhabitants had at once despatched a boat for them, and if that was the little black speck which both gazed upon so eagerly in the wide waste of waters—but even if it were a boat, it would come too late, for the tide was rising slowly, but surely.

Ever nearer, ever nearer, came the waves. But what is the matter with Heinrich? Why does he gaze with such a fixed look upon the overwhelming flood? He sees the waves, and yet he does not see them; he hears them raging, and yet he does not hear them. His spirit is absent. Where is it? Look! look! those are not crests of foam which touch the tips of the waves—no! they are sparrows! And that is not the raging of the waters; no, it is the sparrows, and they are all calling out, 'Fie, you thief! Fie, you thief!'

Heinrich no longer stood in the midst of the expanse of waters—he is a little boy, and in the next room his dying sister is lying, but he is secretly eating the last thing she had desired to refresh her parched lips—her bunch of grapes.

The sparrows have seen it, they were sitting there at the window. Now in his death-hour they come back to him and cry, 'Fie, you thief! Fie, you thief!'

Ever nearer and nearer come the waves. John, with a convulsive effort drags his friend to a little sand-bank which still arises above the waves. Heinrich allows himself to be drawn; his thoughts are not here.

He sees himself in Herr Winter's shop. He has lied, stolen, cheated whenever he could. How often has his mother wept over him; what did he promise

her at his confirmation? Woe to him, he has gone along the broad road which leadeth to destruction.

Ever higher, ever higher, rise the waters! Heinrich has walked along the broad road; now this broad expanse of waters will be his destruction.

And meanwhile the sparrows see him again, and cry, 'Fie, you thief! Fie, you thief!'

Ever higher and higher rise the waters! His whole life lies before Heinrich's eyes. He looks into it as into the clear flood which plays round his feet. All he had done and left undone, his thoughts and plans—he has been evil from his youth up. And now retribution is coming. The waters roar around. With each fresh wave a portion of his life is melting away. Only one short quarter of an hour more and the sea will have swallowed up its victims.

John clung tightly to Heinrich; the strength of the former was more and more failing him, while the latter stood as if the fearful tragedy which was taking place at his feet did not concern him at all. Then a stronger wave rolled up, it covered the knees of the unhappy young men. 'We are lost!' arose from John's breast, but he could only bring out the words with a sob; 'Yes, lost! eternally lost!' echoed in Heinrich's heart.

Ever higher, ever higher, rise the waters!

Then suddenly John perceived another sound than that of the roar of the ocean. It was the stroke of oars. With the strength of despair he shrieks for help, while Heinrich stands silent and motionless. Cry after cry sounds forth from John's lips, the waves are climbing up still quicker to the unhappy youths; already they are lapping around their throbbing hearts; but John has one arm firmly clasped round Heinrich, the other he stretches out to the saving skiff, which now is shooting up to them over the waves.

They are boatmen who are returning to their island, they have heard the cry of distress, the boat is cleaving the waters, while the cheerful cry, 'We are coming! we are coming!' sounds forth to herald their approach. Now they are there. Strong arms lift them both into the boat, while a great wave rushes furiously over the place where they had just stood, which it covers with water as high as a man's stature. Heinrich and John are saved.

'The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.'

CHAPTER IV.

It is Christmas Eve, that evening full of joy and gladness, upon which all hearts are happy and all windows beam brightly by reason of the many lights on all the Christmas trees. It is Christmas Eve when the bells ring more merrily and children are happier than on any other evening in the year. It is Christmas Eve—the night on which so much happens, and the angels of God descend upon the earth.

A thick covering of snow covers the ground, so clean, so white—good enough to spread the most beautiful Christmas gifts upon. The good God has spread it so pure and so smooth before Frau Schröder's door; what gift has He then for her?

Let us enter her dwelling. It is the same low, poorly-furnished room, in which we found her after

her husband's death. Every table, every chair is in the same old place. But Frau Schröder is very much changed, deep furrows are on her face, and her eyes look as if she cried very much. She has not laid aside her black mourning dress, it is in harmony with all that surrounds her. Yes, Frau Schröder's lot is a hard one. Without husband, without child, she is living here quite alone, rheumatism has so crippled her hands that she can scarcely perform her little household duties. She has not suffered want, for kind friends and good neighbours have had compassion on her; but, though they had kept hunger and cold away from the widow's room, they could not bring sunshine and cheerfulness into it. Frau Schröder neither murmurs nor complains, for she knows and loves God's Word, but happy she can only be when it is said of her lost son, 'He came to himself and said, I will arise and go to my Father.'

Christmas Eve awakens other sad recollections in Frau Schröder. This day sixteen years ago Minna died. Oh! had she only lived, her mother would not then have been so lonely and forsaken! and yet the thought of Minna is not a bitter one. Minna is in heaven, but where is Heinrich?

No Christmas-tree burned in Frau Schröder's room, neither had she kindled any light. She looked across into the bright windows of the other houses, and the pictures of many happy Christmas Eves passed through her soul, when she, with her husband and children, had sat beneath the blazing tree, but that is over now, all over.

Then there was a knock at the door. Who could be coming so late? 'Come in!' The tall figure of a man stood on the threshold.

'Does Frau Schröder live here?' asked a deep voice.

'I am Frau Schröder,' she replied, trembling; 'I will go and light a candle.'

The man remained standing at the door while she looked for lucifer-matches. Now the light burned brightly. She held her hand before it to protect it from the wind, and now gazed at the stranger.

'Mother!'

'Heinrich!'

She was about to stretch out her arms, but she sank down. Heinrich supported her, and now there was deep silence in the room. Were not the angels of God passing through that chamber?

The light was extinguished, the white snow sparkled outside, but within there were glorious gifts, such only as God alone can bestow.

The son sat at his mother's feet and told her everything, his whole life. How that day sixteen years ago he had taken the bunch of grapes from his sister; how then he had added sin to sin; how he had deceived and cheated Herr Winter and his other masters without feeling any pangs of conscience. Then came that most terrible and yet most blessed adventure amid the wild waves of the furious ocean. How his conscience was suddenly awakened then, and his whole life in all its wickedness disclosed before him. How, in those terrible moments, the flakes of foam on the crests of the waves seemed to him like the sparrows, the witnesses of his theft, and how plainly the cry which he had heard from them on that Christmas Eve now again sounded in his ears. When

now, he further continued, he was rescued from that terrible death and brought to the island, he fell into a serious illness. Poor indeed, but kind, pious people, took him in and nursed him. When he was again restored to consciousness, after he had long wandered in the delirium of fever, his sins caused him the greatest pain. To a poor old woman, who seldom left his bedside, he told them all; the simple soul knew God's Word, and she showed him the way which she had taken herself to find forgiveness, namely, to the Lord Jesus Who has said, 'I am the way.'

'Yes, mother,' so Heinrich concluded his story, 'I have been a bad young man, but from henceforth it shall be different. I will now, with God's help, walk in the narrow way which leadeth to eternal life. I have caused you much sorrow; forgive me, as God has forgiven me. I could bring you nothing with me,—look, this is all my property;' here he drew a little purse out of his pocket, 'and had my last master, to whom I confessed everything, not been so kind to me, I should not have had even this. But what this purse contains does not belong to me, but to Herr Winter. I have tried to reckon up how much I stole from him. Alas! I do not know exactly! But the double of the probable sum is in this; this evening

I will go to him and take him the money. It seems to be burning in my heart and in my hands. But I have brought to you, dear mother, a couple of strong arms, which will work bravely for you, and a heart which will gladden your old days. To-day we have no Christmas-tree, but if God wills, I hope we may have one next year, and then you will no longer look so sad and worn.'

The son held out his hand to his mother, and she placed her trembling fingers within it. But then she folded them in prayer, and both sat down for a long time in silence, side by side. The angels of God again passed through the room. It was dark in that chamber, but in their hearts shone a brighter light than on any Christmas-tree.

At last Heinrich got up. 'I will now go to Herr Winter. I left him with falsehood on my lips and pride in my heart; I have no peace yet, I must confess everything to him.'

Frau Schröder again lighted the candle to show her son out. When she came back to the room, she took up her Bible, opened the 15th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, then she took a pen and made a thick stroke under the words, 'This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

J. F. C.



COUSIN MAT.

CHAPTER I.

'HO is she, mother?' 'Who?'

'Do tell us who she is, mamma?'

Such was the burthen of the breakfast-table chorus shouted in a variety of tones by a variety of voices, by a party of young people whose ages might range from seven to seventeen.

'Hush, Maurice! Grace, dear, be quiet!' said Mrs. Blount, as she went on reading her letters,

and making remarks upon them to her husband at the other end of the table. His had been put aside till they could be read in peace, and lay in an undisturbed pile at his side. The father's letters are not generally so interesting to the family as the mother's. There is a suspicion, too, of school or college bills, which are pretty sure to involve questions inconvenient to the parties concerned. School-books ill used and replaced; ties of varied hues, according to the requirements of cricket or football, with other like necessities of school-life may be uncomfortable items in the bills. The father's letters, in fact, are the business ones, and young people at home for the holidays do not appreciate business in any form.

'An invitation from the Maynards for Thursday the 10th,' continued Mrs. Blount, 'well, we cannot possibly go, which is a pity, because it includes you, Grace, this time.'

'Oh, mother, why can't we go?' exclaimed Grace, who, having begun her grown-up life three months ago, was keenly alive to all chances of gaiety. 'I should like it so much, for Blanche is at home now, you know. Is it a dinner or a dance?'

'It is a dinner, and a few young people are asked

for the evening; so in fact it is both a dinner and a dance; but we need not discuss it, your cousin is coming on that evening, and after her long journey I should not like to leave her to all the younger ones.'

Whereupon the chorus once more broke out with redoubled vigour, 'Who is she?'

'She is one of the best people in the world,' said Mr. Blount, 'and we are only too glad she is coming amongst you. She is most excellent as well as most highly accomplished.'

Maurice drew a long, comical, side-long grimace at his sister, and said, 'That doesn't tell us who she is though, father. I didn't even know we had a cousin in Scotland. I have heard of an uncle.'

'Well, this is his step-daughter, so she really is not exactly a cousin; in fact, she is no relation whatever to us, and I have not seen her for four years. I hope she will be happy here.'

Mr. Blount now gathered up his letters and went off to his morning room. He had a small estate, and there was generally some one waiting to see him on magistrate's or other business. And as the breakfast party broke up, Mrs. Blount was beset by her children.

'Mother, I cannot think why we need stay at home for this cousin.'

'You didn't know she was coming till this morning, did you?'

'I think it's a great nuisance, especially if she is such a paragon of perfection,' said Maurice.

'Well, she is very perfect,' said their mother; 'and as to the Maynards, your father would not like my going away on her first evening, Grace; so we must give that up. There is another reason, too. The carriage must fetch her from Newport, and it cannot go in two directions at the same time.'

'Is she a jolly kind of a girl?' asked Linford, a boy of eleven.

'Well, I should hardly call her that, Linney.'



'How do you dare to fight?'

'Then she's an old maid, and I hate old maids!' exclaimed Maurice.

'How old is she, mamma?' This was said in chorus as before.

'How old?' Oh, I cannot tell you that. Wait till you see her, and then you can judge for yourselves.'

'Is she pretty?'

That is a matter of taste,' answered Mrs. Blount, on her way to the morning consultation, which always took place, relative to the domestic and dinner-arrangements, immediately after breakfast.

'What a horrid bore!' exclaimed Maurice, the Harrow boy.

'I call it a downright plague,' echoed his younger brother, Linford.

'I hate what they call perfect people,' said Grace. 'They're always hypocrites, and humbug everybody.'

'Perhaps she'll be kind, and play with us,' suggested a small fair-haired girl, who had not spoken before. 'I shouldn't wonder.'

'Shouldn't you really, Aggy? Well, I should,' replied Maurice; 'and I'm certain, from what my father said, that he expects us to profit by her being here. So she comes as a sort of pattern for us, don't you see?'

'We needn't follow it if we don't like,' said Linford. 'It doesn't seem to trouble Roger much. I don't believe he has heard a word we have been saying. Hollo, Roger!' and as he spoke, the boy

threw a pen across the room at his brother, who was absorbed in the book he was reading.

The pen took only too good aim, and stuck its steel nibs straight into Roger's nose. He was a passionate little fellow often; and in another moment he had closed with Linford, the fight being encouraged by Maurice, who stood with his hands in his pockets, cheering and laughing all the more as the boys got more and more angry. A feeble remonstrance from Grace produced no effect whatever; and in another moment a table was overturned, and rivers of ink were flowing over a nearly new Brussels carpet.

'You coward! you bully!' were the muffled exclamations heard now and then, as they scuffled on, hardly knowing what they had done; nor would the fight even now have ceased, had not their father appeared, and thrust them apart.

'How do you dare to fight? I'm thoroughly ashamed of you, boys. You do nothing but mischief all the holidays; and if this sort of thing goes on, we shan't have you home at all. Maurice, I am surprised at you allowing it. Upon my word, I hope your Cousin Mat will do something for you in the way of example, though I really am sorry that she should come into such an unruly house.'

Grace was engaged with the housemaid in trying to repair the damage, but the large black patch on the carpet had not escaped Mr. Blount's eye, and his wrath was not appeased by it.

'I will not have everything in the house destroyed in this way. This is only the first week of the holidays, and I should like to know what will be the state of things at the end of them if you are going on like this. I only wish your cousin was coming sooner. Grace, you had better fetch your mother. You don't get on very well with that carpet business.'

At the mention of their mother's coming, Roger and Linford made their escape silently, by opposite doors. Linford met her.

'What does your father want?' she asked. 'I am busy.'

'It's something about the carpet, I think;' and bounding down the steps into the garden, he began to wish he had not quarrelled so seriously with Roger, as the two had planned a fishing excursion, which could not possibly come off now till one party or the other had eaten humble pie and made up the feud.

CHAPTER II.

'HERE it is again, Grace,' said Maurice, after his father and mother had left the room. 'It is Cousin Mat this, and cousin Mat the other, just as if we had not done very well without her till now. I vote that we agree to treat her as a bore, and then she won't stay here long laying down the law to us.'

'But after all she will be our visitor,' said Grace; 'we must be civil to her: that's the worst part of it. It is worse for me than anybody, because just as I have come out, mother ought to be taking me everywhere, and of course now she must take Cousin Mat, because we cannot dine out a party of four.'

'To be sure not. Ah, well! it doesn't matter, we'll soon send her to Coventry—trust me for that. What does Annie say?'

'Why, of course, Annie is delighted. She always is whatever happens.'

Annie was the eldest of the family, and for three years she had been confined to her sofa with a spinal complaint brought on by a fall.

'And nobody tells Annie that Cousin Mat is coming to look after *her*. It is only at our unlucky heads that she is thrown.'

It certainly would have been wise, if Mr. and Mrs. Blount had not so distinctly set forth Cousin Mat as a pattern to their children, as people are not apt to take to themselves what is intended for them, but it was nevertheless true that they thought that such a companion might influence for good those who in some ways were getting a little beyond their authority.

It was not that any of them were rebellious. They would never have thought of disobeying an order distinctly given, but they were careless of the wishes of their parents, and often much preferred their own opinions and courses of action to those of other people. One after the other they had been over indulged. If there was a dish at the dinner-table which did not quite meet Maurice's approval, his plate was sent away with the food untasted.

While as for conversation, it was difficult for even a guest to get in an uninterrupted sentence. The young people engrossed it all.

And if it was difficult at dinner, it was simply impossible afterwards, when a descent from the nursery upon the dessert rendered the older members of the party helpless in everything but the supplying of the many wants of the younger ones. There was only peace when the children were in bed, and then Mr. Blount would draw up his easy chair and take his nap, which always began with a sort of dreamy wondering why the present generation have taken the law into their own hands so much more than the last had any idea of doing.

'My dear!' Mr. Blount would say to his wife in one of these short intervals of peace, 'it never used to be so in my time. I wonder whether it is our fault or the children's. My father would have thrashed me soundly for a hundredth part of the impertinence of our lads.'

'I don't think ours are worse than other people's,' Mrs. Blount would answer; 'everybody complains. But I have great hopes that Cousin Mat will set things straight for us. She has been so well brought up, and is old enough to see what is right in the behaviour of young people.'

'Seeing what is right won't help her much here, I'm afraid. She'll see a vast deal more of what is wrong. Not that I think our children are wicked; thank God, I don't believe they are. But they're selfish and impudent, and really I don't see my way to put a stop to what I don't like.'

And thus the conversation would end.

Children's quarrels happily do not last long, especially where there are good dispositions and a love of companionship. Linford and Roger found the morning intensely dull while they both considered it below their dignity to speak. They had met once, but instead of saying anything about the fishing excursion on which Roger's heart was fixed, Linford passed by whistling, and looking straight before him.

But things could not go on so, and when they came in to their dinner they had to make common cause during a scolding from their mother about the ink. It could not be proved against one more than the other, and both left the room rather crestfallen, and with less sense of their own dignity.

Under these circumstances it was necessary to devise something which should raise their spirits. And as fishing was too calm and quiet for their present state of mind, it was unanimously resolved to blow up an old pigstye, which they had heard their father say was to be pulled down as soon as the men had time to do it.

It would be much better fun, they said, to have a grand explosion, and to send the fragments, flying, and frighten the animals out of their wits. To take it down brick by brick was clearly a loss of time.

'How are we to get the gunpowder though, Lin?' suggested Roger.

'Why, you don't suppose I haven't thought of that! Did you expect me to ride into Newport for it? No! my dear little boy. I know exactly where Grant keeps his stores. The only thing is, I am afraid the stock is rather low.'

'Hadn't we better ask father?' asked Roger.

'O yes! certainly—you go,' answered Linford with a sneer, 'it's so likely we should get leave, isn't it? especially after the ink business. He will talk, too, about the waste of the gunpowder, but I've got some pocket-money and so have you, so we can soon make that right. Come along, or we shan't get the train laid in time to fire it to-day. It's a long job, you know; we shall have to dig under all that brickwork. You go and fetch the stable spade, and I'll have Grace's. Now she's a swell young lady, her poor garden don't get much of the spade.'

Roger's scruples being entirely overcome by the tempting prospect of digging trenches under the brickwork, he set off at a good round pace to the stables, and when asked why he was carrying off the spade, had presence of mind enough to say he was going to dig.

'What else should he want a spade for? Wasn't a spade made for digging?'

'It strikes me,' said Linford on his return, 'that this is a sort of business which we may as well get over before the arrival of Cousin Mat.'

(To be continued.)

BE A WOMAN.

OF T I've heard a gentle mother,
As the twilight hours began,
Pleading with a son on duty,
Urging him to be a man.
But unto her blue-eyed daughter,
Though with love's words quite as ready,
Points she out the other duty,—
'Strive, my dear, to be a lady.'

What's a lady? Is it something
Made of hoops, and silks, and airs,
Used to decorate the parlour,
Like the fancy mats and chairs?

Is it one that wastes on novels
Every feeling that is human?
If 'tis this to be a lady,
'Tis not this to be a woman.

Mother, then, unto your daughter
Speak of something higher far
Than to be mere fashion's lady—
'Woman' is the brightest star.
If you in your strong affection,
Urge your son to be a true man,
Urge your daughter no less strongly
To arise and be a woman.

Yes, a woman! brightest model
Of that high and perfect beauty,
Where the mind and soul and body
Blend to work out life's great duty.
Be a woman! naught is higher
On the gilded crest of fame;
On the catalogue of virtue
There's no brighter, holier name.

Be a woman! on to duty!
Raise the world from all that's low,
Place high in the social heaven
Virtue's fair and radiant bow.
Lend thy influence to each effort
That shall raise our nature human,
Be not fashion's gilded lady—
Be a brave, whole-souled, true woman.

'BAKED 'TATERS, ALL HOT.'

By W. Baird, M.A.

PERHAPS the coldest of all cold places on a winter's night are the streets of London. In vain does the calman shake his arms and hug his many-caped cloak close to him in the hope of sending some thrill of warmth through his frozen body. Still more vainly does the drunkard crouch in under the shelter of the gin-palace, and drink the fiery liquid, which shall send a glow through his veins. The passenger hurries along and looks forward to the moment when he shall once more sit down in comfort by the brightness of his own fireside. On such a night anything warm is peculiarly welcome. Roast chestnuts and hot pies are in public favour. '*Baked 'taters, all hot,*' is sounded in our ears, and the warm, friendly steam of the can seems to invite us to draw near to share its contents. The most simple form of a potatoe-can is the plain, unpainted tin one, not unlike that used by the street piaman. The central portion of it is devoted to keeping the potatoes hot, whilst a compartment on either side is allotted to salt, and to butter. There is commonly a pepper-box standing on the top of the can. A small valve at once lets out the steam, and acts as a guide to the traveller in search of a hot potato.

Street corners, where an omnibus stops, or near places of public amusement, are the favourite spots for the vendors of this delicacy. The season lasts from the latter end of September till about the end of March. It is said that 300 people gain their livelihood in this way in the streets, and one thing is certain that our street friends have mastered to a nicety the art of



'Baked 'taters, all hot!'

roasting potatoes. If any one wishes to taste a roast potato in perfection, let him eat it fresh from a steam-
ing can with salt and pepper on a frosty night, and he will confess that he never had a better supper.

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Chatterbox.





GRANDPA'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

WHAT a time for *giving* Christmas is! and it is right that it should be so, for is it not the Festival when we all ought to rejoice in the thought of God's best gift to mankind—the gift of His own Son, Who was born as a babe in Bethlehem, that in our human nature He might die for us? And one happy thing among the many happy things of Christmas is, that it makes the old live over again the happiness of their own childhood in sharing the delights of the youngsters around them. It is a time when grandpapas and grandmamas are in their greatest glory. In all happy homes they are looked on as most benevolent persons all the year round, whose pockets are always yielding delightful surprises to their grandchildren. But they are in fullest force of pleasure-giving on Christmas-day; and so you see in the picture grandpa is being beset by a host of twining arms, and bounding legs, and bright eyes, and clamorous voices. But he is quite equal to the attack, and will retire in due time covered with glory and kisses; while grandma also earns the gratitude of the youngsters by the feast she provides for them.

Truly, for home-pleasures Christmas-day is the day of all days, and happy are the children who have got grandpas and grandmas about whom they may sing:—

Our grandpa, dear grandpa, the best of old men,
Forgets on that day that he's threescore and ten;
We climb on his back, and we trot on his knees,
And buzz round his ears like a swarm of young bees.

And grandma, good grandma, how busy is she
To dine at her table this big family;
There are turkeys and geese, and puddings and pies,
Enough, one would think, for a whole year's supplies.

COUSIN MAT.

(Continued from page 31.)

CHAPTER III.



OH, Maurice, Maurice!' screamed Grace, as she opened an upstairs window and bailed her brother, who walked below, 'what do you think? Such a heap of good news! First of all, that cousin can't come till the eleventh—'

'That's all right,' interrupted Maurice; 'one day's reprieve isn't much, after all, though.'

'Oh, but it's everything to me, don't you see? because I haven't told you half! Mrs. Maynard and Blanche have been here; and as the second post letters came in just then, mother was able to accept.'

'And so you've begun to dress already. Let me see: this is the 2nd, and the party is on the 10th. Well, don't keep the carriage waiting—that's all.'

Grace put her hand up to her head, and found that in her anxiety to tell Maurice the good news she had quite forgotten that she had been trying on various wreaths of artificial flowers, to see which suited her best, and that she had therefore appeared at the window decked out with pink heath and lilies of the valley.

'Oh! Maurice dear, please don't tell.'

'My dear Grace, I am sure the Maynards will be so honoured when they know that it took you eight days (including two Sundays, you know) to dress. But how do you propose to lie down? Or is that beneath your notice?'

'I think it will be very unkind, indeed, if you say anything about it.'

'On the contrary, it will be most flattering, for I never saw you look so pretty, Grace—those lilies are bewitching,' cried Maurice.

Grace tore the wreath from her head, and shut the window angrily. If she had been a little older, she would not have cared for her brother's teasing.

As it was she dreaded meeting him at the dinner-table, for she knew that a spirit of mischief was roused within him. She gave him no chance, however, of accusing her of being late, for she was in the dining-room before him. But his first speech showed that he had not forgotten:—

'Grace, after I had the pleasure of seeing you at your window, I met the Maynards. They had been into Newport, and were returning. I told them you would be sure to be in good time on the 10th, but I begin to doubt it now. Dear me, what a pity!' and he looked curiously at his sister's head behind, and in front, and then sideways.

'Maurice, you did not say a word, I'm certain,' replied Grace, colouring scarlet into the very roots of her hair; 'and if you had, I should not care.'

'Oh! you look as if you wouldn't. All right! They think the lilies and roses will do beautifully, because Mrs. Maynard has got some new chintz, which they will exactly match.'

'What is it all about, my dear?' asked Mr. Blount, turning to his daughter. 'What does Maurice mean? Mrs. Maynard is hardly the person to play tricks with. What is it, Grace?'

'Oh! nothing,' stammered Grace, hastily swallowing her fish, and again colouring scarlet; 'only Maurice saw me—' a pause and sob, and Grace rushed away from the table.

'Grace! Grace!' shouted Maurice, 'come back and eat your dinner. What a little goose you are, to be sure!' The last words were, however, lost to Grace, who had bounded up to her room three stairs at a time, and there locked herself in.

'What is it all about, Maurice?' asked his mother.

'Well, really it is all the merest trifle, mother; and Grace asked me not to tell: so perhaps I had better not. She is only a little bothered, and will be all right presently. Don't say anything to her.' Still Maurice was really sorry, and a gloom had fallen over the dinner-table, which made the coming of the children to dessert quite a relief.

'Where's Grace?' said Roger; 'she promised to show me which was the apple off her own tree.'

'I met Grace running upstairs long ago,' said little Margaret.

'Ah, that was because Maurice teased her,' interrupted Linford. Mr. Blount looked sternly at Maurice, who, however, replied that he had been having some fun with Grace, but had not teased her at all. And Maurice gave Linford a warning look, which was meant to express that he knew something which might get him and Roger into trouble if he chose to tell.

The truth was that the boys had been interrupted in their plan for the bombardment of the pigstye. Grant, the keeper, had been unusually careful to keep the powder-case locked. Roger had tried unsuccessfully to wheedle him out of enough to fire a play cannon, and great was the fear therefore that the order for the legal destruction of the pigstye would go forth before the boys could go into Newport to buy the powder. Everything else was ready.

A series of trains and burrows had been dug, and there was no doubt whatever that the whole affair would be a brilliant success.

'It will cost a lot of money,' sighed Roger.

'Oh, never mind, we'll go halves, and I tell you what, Roger, I have great hope of this Cousin Mat. They say she's rich, and no doubt she'll be great in tips. Maurice is too old for anything but a very big one, but I should not mind five shillings a bit, and I wouldn't refuse half-a-crown,' added Linford, with an air of dignity.

'I think Maurice has found out what we are doing,' said Roger, who was seized with perpetual misgivings.

'And if he has it doesn't much matter. I could tell of him about ever so many things. I should tell father about his having put Grace's hat and shawl on Betty Blinker's old donkey, and sent it grazing down the lane like that. Nobody knew it was Maurice except me. I saw him tie down the donkey's ears and all. That would come out well, you see, Roger.'

'Yes, I don't know why Maurice should always be blowing us up for what he calls our mischief. It isn't so very long ago that stones came down the kitchen chimney into the frying-pan just because Maurice wanted to plague Rebecca.'

'Oh! I'm not a bit afraid,' said Linford, 'for our one pigstye business, we could take up fifty things of Maurice's; and if we only choose a good day, we shan't get into a scrape at all—father must be out. A magistrates' meeting at Newport will settle that. Mother and Grace must be here because they will help to scream; but the thing, Roger, which I would not miss for all the world will be the grand effect in the farmyard just over the hedge.'

'I think Grant had better be out too. He is such a surly chap.'

It was possible that Grant might have heard the last sentence, for he passed at that moment, and eyed both the boys keenly.

'Got any powder to spare for my cannon yet, Grant?'

'No; and what's more, I shan't have any to spare if you ask me every minute of the day,' was the answer.

'Oh! I hope I shan't ever see you every minute of the day, you're not such a pleasant-looking fellow as all that you know.'

'I should just like your father to hear your impudence, and I'd just about like to stand by while he

thrashes you, Master Linford—it's what you deserve, that it is.'

'Well, why don't you do it yourself? Now, then, set about it.'

Grant moved on muttering that 'if ever there was aggerawating boys them was it.'

The gunpowder plot had not therefore prospered the more on account of this interview. The keeper always looked upon the race of boys as the enemies of his calling, and the privileged sons of his master were particularly objectionable from their power to annoy him. They knew better than he did where the partridges' nests were, and their sharp eyes were the first to find out the young broods of pheasants.

CHAPTER IV.

It is not very often that young people, full of life and strength, can understand an invalid state, such as Annie Blount's. If she had been very ill, Maurice would have lifted her, Grace would have sat for hours by her side, the little ones would have listened eagerly at her door to know whether she was better or worse.

The father and mother, too, would have put aside their everyday avocations if it had been a short, sharp sickness. But everybody was so accustomed to Annie's state. It was so much a matter of course that she should not be able to walk up and down stairs, and that her sofa should be wheeled to the window or the fire in order that she might have light or warmth, that nobody considered much what she was deprived of. Nobody noticed, too, that, very gradually, she got worse. The others made their plans, and talked of them, riding and driving excursions, and they almost forgot that Annie could not join them. There were a few visitors to the house, and now and then a relation staying in it who came up to her room for a little chat, but as a rule she was excluded from any share in the gaieties of the house. Grace had almost entirely assumed the dignity of the eldest daughter. Annie was constantly reminded that her case was a hopeless one, although every one was kind to her, and would not have hurt her feelings for the world.

She had a sweet, fair face; and though there was on it the mark of constant suffering, it was never clouded by irritability. Annie looked back with thankfulness to her Confirmation. It had taken place just before her accident, and in the preparation for it, and for the Holy Communion, she had been led to see that happiness does not consist in the pleasures of this world, although there was no need to live apart from them. The clergyman, Mr. Miller, who had helped her so far, was able to give her yet more comfort when her time of trial came; and it was from his lips she heard that she could never again enjoy life even in the innocent activity which had hitherto been remarkable in her.

When she heard that Cousin Mat was coming to stay two or three months, it did not make any special impression on her. Cousin Mat would most likely be like all the other people who were very kind and civil, but who evidently only came up to her room because they pitied her, and thought she must be dull.

Now Annie was never dull in the sense of having nothing to do. She read, she drew, she thought, she wrote, she worked; and there was hardly a room in



the house which was not in some way decorated by her. And very often her father's step mounted her stair, and whatever she was doing was instantly put aside for the delight of a chat with him. To her he would confide more than to anybody else his anxieties about the younger ones. And he always left her calmer and happier in his own mind than when he came. Annie had such a hopeful way of looking at things.

(To be continued.)

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

From the German.

TWAS on the night the Lord was born,
 When through the festive town
 A stranger-child, and all forlorn,
 Went wandering up and down.
 At every house he stopped to gaze,
 Where, hung with stars of light,
 The Christmas-tree shot forth its rays
 Through many a window bright.
 Then wept the child, 'Alas for me
 Here wandering all alone!
 To-night all have their Christmas-tree,
 But I—poor I—have none!
 'I, too, have played round such at home,
 With sisters hand in hand:
 And now a stranger child I roam
 Unpitied in the land.
 'No loving smile awaits me now,
 O holy Christ and dear;

Except Thou love me, only Thou,
 I am forgotten here.'

He spoke, when lo, with wand of light,
 And voice, how heavenly sweet!
 Another child, all robed in white,
 Came gliding up the street.

'The holy Christ,' He said, 'am I,
 A child, the same as thee:
 If all forget and pass thee by,
 Thou'rt not forgot by Me.

'And I Myself for thee will raise
 A tree so full of light,
 That those in yonder halls which blaze
 Shall seem to fade from sight.'
 While yet He speaks, from earth to sky
 A golden tree had sprung,
 With stars in clustering radiance
 Amid its branches hung.

How near and yet how far it seemed!
 How bathed in floods of light!
 The child stood near and thought he dreamed,
 It looked so wondrous bright.

He thought he dreamed, while from above
 The angels o'er him smiled,
 And gently stretched their arms in love
 Towards the stranger child.

They lift, they bear him from the ground,
 Up through the shining space;
 And now the outcast one has found
 With Christ his resting-place.



LONDON PARCELS DELIVERY MAN.



HE circulation of parcels in London is almost as wonderful as the circulation of letters through the Post-office. By means of shops that act as 'receiving houses,' a well-trained and intelligent staff of men, and a system that has been perfected by experience, thousands of parcels are, day by day, distributed quickly, safely, and cheaply to all parts of the metropolis.

The visits of the Parcels Delivery-cart, if not so frequent as those of the postman, have this

great advantage, that while in the postman's packet there are often letters containing tidings that cause anxiety, or bitter grief, the Parcels Delivery-man has rarely any hidden sources of annoyance in his van; he is commonly the bearer of something to supply our wants, or to add to our luxuries; especially at Christmas-tide he is the distributor of unnumbered tokens of kindness and love, done up in boxes, hampers, and parcels, containing all sorts of good things for young and old, rich and poor, which not only fly about from one end of the great city to the other, but also pour down from London to the country, and stream up from the country to London.

Though these tokens of good-will are very pleasant to those who receive them, yet they nearly drive the

poor Parcels Delivery-man distracted, and they often keep him at work till far into the night. Let us hope that he who has had such hard work in ministering to

the Christmas pleasures of others, may himself enjoy in his own home the bright and happy Christmas which he has so well earned.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

LO! the merry bells are ringing
Their sweet welcome to the morn,
And the white-robed choirs are singing,
'Unto us a Child is born!'

And there's many a kindly greeting
On this happy Christmas-day!
Yes, there's many a joyous meeting
With old friends from far away!

Now the cheerful log is burning
On the hearth with flame so bright,
And the cheerful group is turning
In a circle to its light.

Every kind and generous feeling
Gladsome Christmas-tide imparts;
'Peace on earth' to man revealing,
Hailed with joy by many hearts.

Would we realise its gladness,
Would we share its holy calm,
Let us look on others' sadness,
Let us bring a soothing balm.

For the seed of love we're sowing
In a blessing shall appear:—
From the heavenly source o'erflowing,
It shall crown the coming year.

S. C. C.



A ROMANTIC STORY.



HERE is a cavern in the Island of Hoonga, one of the Tonga Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean, which can be entered by diving into the sea, and has no other light than what is reflected from the bottom of the water. A young chief discovered it accidentally while diving after a turtle; and the use which he made of his discovery is a fitting subject for a ballad.

There was a tyrannical governor at Vavao, against whom one of the chiefs formed a plan of insurrection; it was betrayed, and the chief, with all his family and kin, were ordered to be destroyed. He had a beautiful daughter, betrothed to a chief of high rank, and she was also included in the sentence. The youth who had found the cavern, and had kept the secret to himself, loved this damsel; he told her the danger in time, and persuaded her to trust herself to him. They got into a canoe, the place of her retreat was described to her on the way to it—these women swim like mermaids—she dived after him, and rose in the cavern. In the widest part it is

about fifty feet, and its medium height is guessed at the same, the roof hung with stalactites. Here he brought her the choicest food, the finest clothing, mats for her bed, and sandal-wood oil to perfume herself: here he visited her as often as was consistent with prudence; and here, as may be imagined, this Tonga leader wooed and won the maid, whom he had longed loved in secret, when he had no hope.

Meantime he prepared, with all his dependents, male and female, to emigrate in secret to the Fiji Islands. The intention was so well concealed, that they embarked in safety, and his people asked him, at the point of his departure, if he would not take with him a Tonga wife; and accordingly, to their astonishment, having steered close to a rock, he desired them to wait while he went into the sea to fetch her, jumped overboard, and just as they were beginning to be seriously alarmed at his long disappearance, he rose with his mistress from the water. This story does not lack that which all such stories should have to be perfectly delightful—a fortunate conclusion. The party remained at the Fijis till the oppressor died, and then returned to Vavao, where they enjoyed a long and happy life.

THE BATTLE AND THE VICTORY.



HE shades of the setting sun were casting their shadows along the crowded thoroughfares of London, which the December fog enveloped in its dreary folds. It was Christmas eve; and all who had a home to go to, pressed eagerly forward,—thinking, perhaps, of the bright fires, the joyous welcome, and the merry faces that awaited them. The lights shone forth in the shop-windows, the sun went down, and evening fell on the city.

But not to all did the Christmas eve bring gladness or mirth; to many it left no sign that its joyous presence had hovered around their dwellings. When the evening was far advanced, a boy walked slowly forth from an abode in which no Yule log was blazing on the hearth. He had gone a few steps down the narrow alley; but turned, as the sorrowful tones of a pale, pretty little girl, who had followed him to the door, fell upon his ear.

'Oh, Charlie, are you going out, and leaving me all alone?'

'I must go, Alie dear. I want to try if I can't get money some way or other, to buy you something nice, that it may be to you a little more like the Christmas eve of long ago.'

'Poor Charley!' answered the little girl, 'you look so tired. Oh! I wish that we were rich; you would not then have to work so hard.'

'Oh! hush, Alie; there's no use wishing. Good-bye.'

Charlie turned quickly, and walked down the alley, passing into the next street. He stood under a lamp, and watched the lighted shops. He knew it was impossible to get work at that time of night; he had often tried it, but in vain; and all day long he was hard at work earning the weekly pittance, which provided scarcely food enough for his dying mother, Alie, and himself. Alie was not his sister. Charlie's father had been a country labourer; and one morning he had brought Alie, a child two years old, to his cottage, and told his family she was their orphan cousin, and they were to treat her as if she were their sister. The next day they had come to London; and now all were dead except the little cousin and Charlie's mother.

'We will both be orphans soon,' he murmured to himself. 'Oh how hard it is! Poor mother! her last Christmas eve!' He walked on briskly, to hide from any idle passer-by the sobs he was unable to suppress. The shop-windows looked so charming, that he lingered every now and then, gazing on those most alluring to his eyes. He stopped at last before one, a long, long time. A gentleman was making numerous purchases; and the boy became so interested in watching the proceedings, that he almost forgot his hunger and his grief. But the gentleman could not buy for ever; and far too soon for Charlie's enjoyment, he laid a bank-note on the counter. The shopman took up the note, and, placing a sovereign before his purchaser, turned to another part of the shop, in

order to give some directions about the gentleman's parcel, as well as many others that had to be sent home that Christmas eve.

The gentleman had turned away also, to examine some articles on a shelf behind; and Charlie's eyes were riveted on the gold coin lying on the counter. He saw nothing but that one bright spot in all the shop. The thought of the comforts it could procure for his mother and cousin swept through his heart like a mighty wave, overwhelming all scruple, all better, nobler feeling, leaving no thought in his heart but the burning desire to have that sovereign. In another moment he is standing unperceived within the shop, and his hand is on the gold. Another moment, and the hand that might one day have been raised in some foul midnight crime would have committed its first dark deed; but a merciful God intercepted it, while it was yet time, and spared the child of many prayers; for, as vividly as a flash of lightning, a scene, which the boy would never forget, came before his eyes. In the London home, on his deathbed, lay his father; and that father's last words rang in Charlie's ears, and filled his heart with a strange thrill: 'Promise me, through all your life, my child, to live honestly and honourably.'

The boy flung the gold on the counter, and, unconscious of and unheeding the eyes that were now watching him, cried aloud: 'Never! I will be true to my promise,' and bounded into the street.

Terror then lent him wings; for he heard, as he thought, the shopman calling after him, 'Stop, boy!' At last, wearied out, he leant against a wall at the corner of a lonely street, and burst into a flood of passionate sobs and tears. Some minutes passed, and he was quieter, when he heard a voice close beside him, saying, gently, 'Poor child! will you tell me your grief?' He looked up surprised; and oh! horror! he saw the gentleman who had been in the shop. Charlie would have fled again; but the gentleman laid hold of his arm, and walked on with him.

'Tell me,' said he, 'about your promise; what was it? To whom was it given?'

'To my father; but oh! do not put me in prison: I never stole before. And oh! sir, my poor father! Oh! have mercy; and—'

'And you have not stolen now,' interrupted the gentlemen: 'you have been spared that misery. Now tell me about yourself. What was your father's name?'

'Charles Lacy,' answered the boy; 'and he used to live in Exfield.'

The gentleman started; for the name brought to his remembrance a beautiful village girl, with whom his son had fallen in love; and when the stern father had forbidden the marriage, the impulsive youth had left his father's house, and married the girl.

From that hour the father had forbidden him ever again to cross his threshold. But when, two years later, repentance had come to the lonely father's heart, and he sought his son, he found only the graves of that son and his village bride. He heard, indeed, that a child had been born to them, but that the girl's relations had taken it away with them, when they left that part of the country. Alas! all his endeavours to discover them had proved unsuccessful.



'Boy!' cried the gentleman eagerly, 'tell me, had your father a sister named Alie? Did she marry above her station? Did she leave a child? Have you a cousin? How long is it since you left Exfield? and does your father still live? Quick! answer!'

Wonderingly Charlie answered the eager questioner; and when he heard the gentleman exclaim, 'Thank God, I have found her at last!' he knew that he stood before Alie's grandfather.

'Oh! come to my mother,' he cried; 'she will tell you all you wish to know.' The two—the boy leading the gentleman—hurried along the crowded London streets, until they came to Charlie's poor abode. When the door was opened, the boy burst into the room, exclaiming: 'Oh, Alie, I knew you were born a lady! Alie, your wish is granted; you will never know sorrow nor want any more; you will never spend another unhappy Christmas!'

What more need be told? Alie went to live with her grandfather; but, to that benevolent gentleman's disappointment, Charlie would not accept more from him than his interest in procuring him a situation, where he received liberal payment, and, through honesty and industry, won himself a road to independence. His mother did not die just then; she lived to bless her son, in his own comfortable home, on the next Christmas eve, and then 'she passed to where, beyond these regions, there is peace.'

And what would it have been had Charlie Lacy not found grace to resist temptation?

Many years had passed away, when one day a fine carriage drove up to a house in one of the most fashionable parts of London, and a lady and gentleman alighted. It was Charlie Lacy; and he led into his home his wife—his cousin Alie.

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